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REMAINS

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL,

LATE MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL,
BEDFORD-ROW, LONDON.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A VIEW OF HIS CHARACTER

BY JOSIAH PRATT, B.D.F.A.S.

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INTRODUCTION.

He that has the happy talent of parlour-preaching," says Dr. Watts, "has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit."

On my first intercourse with Mr. Cecil, now upwards of fifteen years since, when in the full vigour of his mind, I was so struck with the wisdom and originality of his remarks, that I considered it my duty to record what seemed to me most likely to be useful to others.

It should be observed that Mr. Cecil is made to speak often of himself; and, to persons who do not consider the circumstances of the case, there may appear much egotism in the quantity of such remarks here put together, and in the manner in which his things are said: but this will be treating him with the most flagrant injustice; for it must be remembered, that the remarks of this nature were chiefly made by him, from time to time, in answer to my particular inquiries into his judgment and habits, on certain points of doctrine or practice.

I have laboured, in recording those sentiments which I have gathered from him in conversation, to

preserve as much as possible his very expressions; and they who were familiar with his manner will be able to judge, in general, how far I have succeeded: but I would explicitly disavow an exact verbal responsibility. For the sentiments I make myself answerable.

In some instances, I have brought together observations made at different times. The reader is not, therefore, to understand that the thoughts here collected on any subject always followed in immediate connection.

A VIEW

OF

THE CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL.

In depicting the personal and ministerial character of my departed friend, while I shall communicate occasionally the impressions made by him on my own mind, most of which were recorded at the time they were made, I shall endeavour to render him, as much as possible, the portrayer of his own character, by detailing those descriptions of his views and feelings which I gathered from him.

Nature, education, and grace combine to form and model the personal character of every Christian. God gives to his reasonable creatures such physical and intellectual constitution as he pleases. Education and circumstances hide or unfold, restrain or mature this constitution; and grace, while it regulates and sanctifies the powers of the man, varies its own appearances according to the varieties of those powers. And it is by the endless modifications and counteractions of these

principles, that the personal character of a Christian is formed.

It might have been expected from Mr. Cecil's earliest displays of character, that he was formed to be an instrument of extensive evil or of eminent good. There was a decision—a daring—an untamableness in the structure of his mind even when a boy, combined with a tone of authority and command, and a talent in the exercise of these qualities, to which the minds of his associates yielded an implicit subjection. Fear of consequences never entered into his view. Opposition, especially if accompanied by anything like severity or oppression, awakened unrelenting resistance.

Yet this bold and untamable spirit was allied to a noble and generous disposition. There was a magnificence in his mind. While he was scrupulously delicate, perhaps even to some excess, on subjects entrusted to his secrecy, and on affairs in progress; yet he would never lend himself in his own concerns, or in those of others, to anything that bordered on artifice and manœuvre: for he had a native and thorough contempt of whatever was mean, little, and equivocating. That "honesty is the best policy" may be a strong, or the prevailing motive for uprightness with men of a lower tone of character; but I question if it at all entered into calculation with my great friend. His mind was too noble to have recourse to other means, or to aim at other ends, than those which he avowed; and too intrepid not to avow those which he did entertain, so far as might be required or expedient.

His temptations were to the sins of the spirit, rather than to those of the flesh; and he possessed, all his life long, a superiority to the pleasures of mere sense not often seen. He was, indeed, temperate in all things—holding his bodily appetites in entire subjection.

Sympathy with suffering was an eminent characteristic of Mr. Cecil's mind—a sympathy which sprung less from that softness and sensibility which are the ornament of the female, than from the generosity of his disposition. He would have had all men happy. It gratified his generous nature to ease the burdens of suffering man. If any were afflicted by the visitations of God, he taught them to bow with submission, while he pitied and relieved: if the affliction were the natural and evident fruit of crimes, he admonished while he sympathized: if the sufferings of man or brute arose from the voluntary inflictions of others, he was indignant against the oppressor.

Such was the intrepid and noble, yet humane mind, which was trained by divine grace, under a long course of moral discipline, for eminent usefulness in the Church of God. Mr. Cecil's intellectual endowments will be spoken of hereafter. At present, I shall trace the rise and the advances of his Christian character.

He had early religious impressions. These were first received from Janeway's "Token for Children," which his mother gave him when he was about six years of age. "I was much affected by this book," said he, "and recollect that I wept, and got into a corner, where I prayed that I also might have an 'interest in Christ,' like one

of the children there mentioned, though I did not know what the expression meant."

Those impressions of his childhood wore away. He fell into the follies and vices of youth; and by degrees began to listen to infidel principles, till he avowed himself openly an unbeliever. He has alluded frequently in his writings to this criminal part of his history; but I shall add some paragraphs on this point partly in his own words.

He was suffered to proceed to awful lengths in infidelity. The natural daring of his mind allowed him to do nothing by halves. Into whatever society he enlisted himself, he was its leader. He became even an apostle of infidelity—anxious to banish the scruples of more cautious minds, and to carry them all lengths with his own. And he was too successful. In after life he has met more than one of these converts, who have laughed at all his affectionate and earnest attempts to pull down the fabric erected too much by his own hands. Yet he was never wholly sincere in his infidelity. He has left a most impressive and encouraging testimony to the power of parental influence in preserving his mind, under the grace of God, from entirely believing his own lie.* He gave me a further instance of the power of conscience in this respect:—

"When I was sunk in the depths of infidelity, I was afraid to read any author who treated Christianity in a dispassionate, wise and searching manner. He made me uneasy. Conscience would

*See Remains: on the Influence of the Parental Character.

gather strength. I found it more difficult to stifle her remonstrances. He would recall early instructions and impressions, while my happiness could only consist with their obliteration."

Yet he appears to have taken no small pains to rid himself of his scruples;—"I have read," said he, "all the most acute and learned and serious infidel writers, and have been really surprised at their poverty. The process of my mind has been such on the subject of revelation, that I have often thought Satan has done more for me than for the best of them; for I have had, and could have produced arguments that appeared to me far more weighty than any I ever found in them against Revelation."

He did not proceed in this career of sin without occasional checks of conscience. Take the following instance:—

"My father had a religious servant. I frequently cursed and reviled him. He would only smile on me. That went to my heart. I felt that he looked on me as a deluded creature. I felt that he thought he had something which I knew not how to value, and that he was therefore greatly my superior. I felt there was a real dignity in his conduct. It made me appear little even in my own eyes. If he had condescended to argue with me, I could have cut some figure; at least by comparison, wretched as it would have been. He drew me once to hear Mr. Whitefield. I was seventeen or eighteen years old. It had no sort of religious effect on me, nor had the preaching of any man in my unconverted state. My religion began in contemplation. Yet I conceived a high

reverence for Mr. Whitefield. I no longer thought of him as the "Dr. Squintum" we were accustomed to buffoon at school. I saw a commanding and irresistible effect, and he made me feel my own insignificance."

For this daring offender, however, God had mercy in reserve! He was the child of many tears, instructions, admonitions, and prayers; and, though now a prodigal, he was to be recovered from his wickedness.

While under the control of bad principles, he gave into every species of licentiousness—saving that, even then, the native nobleness of his mind made him despise whatever he thought mean and dishonourable. Into this state of slavery he was brought by his sin; but here the mercy of God taught him some most important lessons, which influenced his views and governed his ministry through after life, and the same mercy then rescued him from the slavery to which he had submitted. The penetration and grandeur of his mind, will his natural superiority to sensual pleasures, made him feel the littleness of every object which engages the ambition and the desires of the carnal man: insomuch that God had given him, in this unusual way of bringing him to himself, a thorough disgust of the world, before he had gained any hold of higher objects and better pleasures.

It was thus that God prepared him for further communications of mercy. And here he felt the advantage of having been connected with sincere Christians. He knew them to be holy, and he felt that they were happy. "It was one of the

first things," said he, "which struck my mind in a profligate state, that, in spite of all the folly, and hypocrisy, and fanaticism which may be seen among religious professors, there was a mind after Christ, a holiness, a heavenliness, among real Christians." He added on another occasion, "My first convictions on the subject of religion were confirmed from observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them, which I had felt that the vanities of the world could not give. I shall never forget standing by the bed of my sick mother. 'Are not you afraid to die?' I asked her; 'No.' 'No!' 'Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?' 'Because God has said to me, Fear not: when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' The remembrance of this scene has oftentimes since drawn an ardent prayer from me, that I might die the death of the righteous."

His mind opened very gradually to the truths of the gospel: and the process through which he was led is a striking evidence of the imminence of his past danger. "My feelings," he said, "when I was first beginning to recover from my infidelity, prove that I had been suffered to go great lengths; and, to a very awful degree, to believe my own lie. My mind revolted from Christianity. God did not bring me to himself, by any of the peculiar motives of the gospel. When I was about twenty years old, I became utterly sick of the vanity, and disgusted with the folly of the world. I had no thought of Jesus Christ, or of redemption. The very notion of

Jesus Christ or of redemption repelled me. I could not endure a system so degrading. I thought there might possibly be a Supreme Being; and if there were such a being, he might hear me when I prayed. To worship the Supreme Being seemed somewhat dignified. There was something grand and elevating in the idea. But the whole scheme and plan of redemption appeared mean, and degrading, and dishonourable to man. The New Testament, in its sentiments and institutions, repelled me; and seemed impossible to be believed, as a religion suitable to man.

The grace of God triumphed, however, over all opposition. The religion which began in this disgust with the world and disaffection to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, made rapid advances in his mind. The seed sown in tears by his inestimable mother, though long buried, now burst into life, and shot forth with vigour: and he became a preacher of that truth, which once he laboured to destroy. Yet grace did not annihilate the natural character and qualities of the mind; though it regulated and directed them. The Christian's feelings and experience were modified by the constitution of the man. After a long course of spiritual watchfulness and warfare, he spoke thus of himself:

"There is what Bacon calls a dry light, in which subjects are viewed, without any predilection, or passion, or emotion, but simply as they exist. This is very much my character as a Christian. I have great constitutional resistance. Tell me such a thing is my duty—I know it is, but there I stop. Talk to me of hell—my heart would

rise with a sort of daring stubbornness. There is a constitutional desperation about me, which was the most conspicuous feature in my character when young, and which has risen up against the gracious measures which God has all my life taken to subdue and break it. I feel I can do little in religion without encouragement. I am persuaded and satisfied, tied and bound, by its truth, and importance, and value; but I view the subject in a dry light. A strong sense of divine friendship goes a vast way with me. When I fall, God will raise me. When I want, God will provide. When I am in perplexity, God will deliver. He cares for me—pities me—bears with me—guides me—loves me!"

But the energy of divine grace was most conspicuous, in the control and mastery of this resisting and high spirit of which our friend complained. Nay, if there were any one Christian virtue in which he was more advanced than any other, it appears to me to have been humility—not that humility which debases itself that it may be exalted, and which is offended if its professions be believed: but the humility which arose from an abiding and growing conviction of his infinite distance from the standard of perfection, and the little comparative use which he had made of his many means and helps in approaching that standard—a humility that expressed itself, therefore, in a teachableness of mind,* a ready acknowledg-

* "A friend, who knew him for thirty or forty years, has informed me," says Mr. Wilson, in the sermons preached on occasion of Mr. Cecil's death, "that he was more ready to hear of his faults from persons whom he esteemed, than

ment of excellence in others, and a candor in judging of other persons which are seldom equalled; and which were rare endowments in a mind that could not but feel its own powers, and its superiority to that of most other men. But God has a thousand unseen methods of forming and cherishing those graces in his servants, which seems most opposed to their constitution, and least to be expected in their circumstances.

Mr. Cecil gave me one day the following remarkable illustration of this subject in his own case:—"It is a nice question in casuistry—how far a man may feel complacency in the exercise of talent. A hawk exults on his wing; he skims and sails, delighting in the consciousness of his powers. I know nothing of this feeling. Dissatisfaction accompanies me, in the study and in the pulpit. I never made a sermon with which I felt satisfied. I never preached a sermon with which I felt satisfied. I have always present to my mind such a conception of what might be done, and I sometimes hear the thing so done, that what I do falls very far beneath what it seems to me it should be. Some sermons which I have heard have made me sick of my own for a month afterwards. Many ministers have no conception of anything beyond their own world: they compare themselves only with themselves; and per-

most men. When any failings were pointed out to him, he usually thanked the reprover, and anxiously inquired for further admonitions. I have observed myself, that, when he gave advice, which he did with acuteness and decision, he was quite superior to that little vanity which is offended if the counsel be not followed."

haps they must do so. If I could give them my views of their ministry, without changing the men, they would be ruined; while now they are eminent instruments in God's hands. But some men see too much beyond themselves for their own comfort. Perhaps complacency in the exercise of talent, be it what it may, is hardly to be separated, in such a wretched heart as man's, from pride. It seems to me that this dissatisfaction with myself, is the messenger sent to buffet me and keep me down. In other men, the separation between complacency and pride may be possible; but I scarcely think it is so in me."*

I have alluded to Mr. Cecil's ready acknowledgment of the worth of others; and I must add, that he cultivated that discrimination of excellence, which leads a man to discover and esteem it in the midst of imperfections. He had an unfeigned regard to real worth, wherever it was found. The powers of the understanding have often fascinated men of inferior wisdom, and lessened the odiousness of an immoral state of heart too plainly seen in others; but if the excellencies of the head and the heart must be disjoined, he never failed to value that which is most truly valuable. He would say—"Such a friend of ours

* Mr. Churton has a remark on Dr. Johnson, somewhat of a similar nature to this of Mr. C. on himself. He thinks that "Johnson's morbid melancholy and constitutional infirmities were intended by Providence, like St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, to check intellectual conceit and arrogance; which the consciousness of his extraordinary talents, awake as he was to the voice of praise, might otherwise have generated in a very culpable degree."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

is what many men look down on, as a weak man; but I honour his wisdom and his devotedness. He throws himself out, and all the powers which God has given him, into the service of his Master, in all those ways which seem to him best; and, though perhaps he and I should for ever differ on the best way, and though I see in him many peculiarities and weaknesses, yet I honour and love the man; I revere his simplicity and his piety. He is what God has made him; and all that he is he puts into action for God." If Mr. Cecil was at any time severe in his remarks on others, his severity was chiefly directed against that ignorant vanity and affectation, which push a man forward where great men would retire, and which make him dogmatical, where wise men would speak with humility and candor.

Closely allied with his humility, was that openness to conviction, which Mr. Cecil possessed in an unusual degree. He had dived so deeply into his own heart, and had read man so accurately—his short-sightedness, his scanty span, his pride, and his passions—that he was, more than most men, superior to that little feeling which makes us quit the scholar's form. Many men speak of themselves and of all around them as in a state of pupilage and childhood, but I never approached a man, on whose mind this conviction had a more real and practical influence.

Disinterestedness was a pre-eminent characteristic of Mr. Cecil as a Christian. His whole spirit and conduct spoke one language:—"Let me and mine be nothing, so that thy kingdom may come!" His disinterestedness was grounded on his convic-

tion of the absolute nothingness of all earthly good, compared with the glory of Christ and the interests of his kingdom. In all pecuniary transactions of a private or public nature, he was governed by this principle; and made a free and cheerful sacrifice of what he might have lawfully obtained, if he thought his receiving it would impede his usefulness.

On one occasion of this nature, he explained the noble principle on which he acted:—"A Christian is called to refrain from some things, which, though actually right, yet will not bear a good appearance to all men. I once judged it my duty to refuse a considerable sum of money, which I might lawfully and fairly have received, because I considered that my account of the matter could not be stated to some, to whom a different representation would be made. A man who intends to stand immaculate, and, like Samuel, to come forward and say—'*Whose ox or whose ass have I taken?*' must count the cost. I knew that my character was worth more to me than this sum of money. By probity, a man honours himself. It is the part of a wise man, to wave the present good for the future increase. A merchant suffers a large quantity of goods to go out of the kingdom to a foreign land, but he has his object in doing so; he knows by calculation, that he shall make so much more advantage by them. A Christian is made a wise man by counting the cost. The best picture I know of the exercise of this virtue, drawn by the hand of man, is that by John Bunyan in the characters of Passion and Patience.

Associated with this disinterestedness of spirit, was a singular practical reliance on Providence, in all the most minute and seemingly indifferent affairs of his life. He was emphatically, to use his own expression "a pupil of signs"—waiting for and following the leadings and openings of divine Providence in his affairs. I once consulted him throughout a very delicate, and perplexing affair. In one stage of it, he said to me "you have not done this thing exactly as I should have felt my mind led to do it. I feel myself in such cases like a child in the middle of an intricate and perplexed wood. Two considerations weigh with me: first—If I could see all the involutions, and relations, and bearings, and consequences of the affair, then I might feel myself able to move forward: but secondly—I know not one of them, not even the shadow of one, nay, hardly the probability of such and such issues. Then I am driven to simple reliance. I have never found God fail me in such cases. When I am utterly lost and confounded, I look for openings, clear and evident to my own conviction. I have a warrant for all this. Our grand danger with reference to Providence, is, that we should walk as men:—*Are ye not carnal and walk as men?*"

On another occasion he said,—"We make too little of the subject of Providence. My mind is by nature so intrepid and sanguine, and it has so often led me to anticipate God in his guidings, to my severe loss, that perhaps I am now too suspicious and dilatory in following him. However, this is a maxim with me—that, when I am waiting with a simple, childlike spirit for openings and

guidings, and imagine I perceive them, God would either prevent the semblance of them from rising up before me, if these were not his leadings in reality, or he would preserve me from deeming them such; and therefore I always follow what appears to be my duty without hesitation."

But the spring of all these Christian virtues, and the master-grace of his mind, was faith. His whole spirit and character were a living illustration of that definition of the apostle—*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!* He appeared to me never to be exercised with doubts and fears. His magnanimity entered most strikingly into his religious character. He was convinced and satisfied by all the divine declarations and promises—and he left himself, with unsuspecting confidence, in God's hands.*

I quote Mr. Wilson's testimony to the patience of our friend under afflictions. "He was not only, in opposition to all the tendencies of his natural dispositions, resigned, but cheerful under his trials. I have seen him repeatedly at his living in the country, return from his ride racked with pain: pale, emaciated, and speechless. I have seen him

* Mr. Wilson justly remarks of our friend, that "the determination and grandeur of his mind displayed his faith to peculiar advantage. This divine principle quite realized and substantiated to him the things which are *not seen and eternal.* It was absolutely like another sense. The things of time were as nothing. Everything that came before him was referred to a spiritual standard. His one great object was fixed, and this object engrossed his whole soul. Here his foot stood immovable, as on a rock. His hold on the truths of the Scriptures was so firm, that he acted on them boldly and unreservedly. He went all lengths, and risked all consequences, on the word and promise of God."

throw himself all along upon his sofa, on his face, and cover his forehead with his hands; and there, without an expression of complaint, endure the paroxysm of his disorder; and I have been astonished to observe him rise up in an instant, with his wonted dignity, and enter upon conversation with cheerfulness and vigour. He has often acknowledged to me, that the anguish he felt was like a dagger plunged into his side, and that through a whole summer he has not had two nights free from tormenting pain. Such were his sufferings for ten or twelve years previous to his last illness. And yet this was the man, or rather this was the Christian, from whose lips I never heard a murmuring word."

It is almost needless to add that Mr. Cecil possessed remarkable decision of character. When he went to Oxford he had made a resolution of restricting himself to a quarter of an hour daily, in playing on the violin, on which instrument he greatly excelled, and of which he was extravagantly fond; but he found it impracticable to adhere to his determination, and had so frequently to lament the loss of time in this fascinating amusement, that with the noble spirit which characterized him through life, he cut his strings, and never afterward replaced them. He studied for a painter; and, after he had changed his object, retained a fondness and a taste for the art. He was once called to visit a sick lady, in whose room there was a painting which so strongly attracted his notice, that he found his attention diverted from the sick person, and absorbed by the painting. From that moment he formed the resolution of mortifying a

taste, which he found so intrusive, and so obstructive to him in his nobler pursuits; and determined never afterwards to frequent the exhibition.

Nor was his intrepid and inflexible firmness less conspicuous, whenever the interests of truth and the honour of Christ were concerned. The world in arms would not have appalled him, while the glory of Christ was in his view. Nor do I believe that he would have hesitated for a moment, after he had given to nature her just tribute of feeling and of tears, to go forth from his family and "join the noble army of martyrs" who expired in the flames in Smithfield, had the honour of his Master called him to this sacrifice; nor would his knees have trembled, nor his look changed.

Yet I cannot but add that this firmness never degenerated into rudeness. He knew and observed all those decencies of life, which render mutual intercourse agreeable; and he had that ease of manner, among all classes of society, which bespoke perfect self-possession and a thorough knowledge of the world. His address in meeting the manners and habits of thinking of persons of rank, either when they were inquiring into religion or under affliction, was perhaps scarcely to be equalled.

The associations in our friend's mind were often of a very humorous kind. He had a strong natural turn for associations of this nature, which threw a great vivacity and charm over his familiar conversation—employed as it was, in the main, like every faculty of his mind, for useful ends. He was fully aware, however, of the danger of possessing such a faculty, and the temptations to which it exposed him, prompted and supported

as it was by a buoyancy of spirits, which even great and lengthened pain could scarcely subdue. I have looked at him, and listened to him, with astonishment—when, meeting with a few other young men occasionally at his house, we have found him dejected and worn out with pain—stretched on his sofa, and declining to join in our conversation, till he caught an interest in what was passing—when the question of an enquiring or burdened conscience has roused him to an exertion of his great mind—he has risen from his sofa—he has forgot his sufferings—and he has left us nothing to do but to admire and treasure up most profound and impressive remarks on the Scripture, on the heart, and on the world.

The mention of his humour and his vivacity of spirit leads me to remark, that I am not writing a panegyric, but drawing a character. No likeness can be faithful, while the best original is such as he must be in the present state, if it carry no shades. I have no wish to conceal the shades of this extraordinary character. Sternness and levity were the two constitutional evils which most severely exercised him. They seem to have been the necessary result, in an imperfect being, of the union of that masculine and original vigour with humour and an ardent fancy, which met in the structure of his mind. So far, indeed, had grace triumphed over these constitutional enemies, that the very opposite features were the most prominent in his character; and no one could approach him without feeling himself with a most tender and serious mind. I speak of those occasional ebullitions, which tended to remind him, that, though

he was invested with a new and triumphant nature, he was yet at home in the body, and subject to the recurrence of his constitutional infirmities.

Yet, though Mr. Cecil felt occasionally temptations to levity, through the buoyancy and spring of his animal spirits, his prevailing temper was of a quite opposite description. A sensibility of spirit, with his view of human nature and of the world, threw a cast of melancholy over his mind. He was far more disposed to weep over the guilt and misery of man, than to smile at his follies. "I have," said he, "a salient principle in me. My spirits never sink. Yet I have a strong dash of melancholy. It is a high and exquisite feeling. When I first awake in the morning, I could often weep with pleasure. The holy calm—the silence —the freshness — thrill through my soul. At such moments I should feel the presence of any person to be intrusion and impertinence, and common affairs to be nauseous. The stillness of an empty house is paradise to me. The man who has never felt thus cannot be made to understand what I mean."

"Hooker's dying thought," he added, is "congenial to my spirit. 'I am going to leave a world disordered, and church disorganized, for a world and a church where every angel and every rank of angels stand before the throne in the very post God has assigned them.' I am obliged habitually to turn my eye from the wretched disorders of the world and the church, to the beauty, harmony, meekness, and glory of a better world."

On another occasion, he said—"I have been

long in the habit of viewing everything around me as in a state of alienation. I have no hold on my dearest comforts. My children must separate from me. One has his lot cast in one place, and another elsewhere. It may be my particular leading, but I have never leaned toward my comforts without finding them give way. A sharp warning has met me—'These are aliens, and as an alien live thou among them.' We may use our comforts by the way. We may take up the pitcher to drink, but the moment we begin to admire, God in love will dash it to pieces. But I feel no such alienation from the church. I am united to Christ, and to all his glorified and living members, by an indissoluble bond. Here my mind can centre and sympathize, without suspicion or fear.'

"I feel," he would say, "a congeniality with the character of Jeremiah. I seem to understand him. I could approach him, and feel encouraged to familiarity. It is not so with Elijah or Ezekiel. There is a rigor or severity about them, which seem to repel me to a distance, and excite reverence rather than sympathy and love."

In a very interesting case on which I consulted him, he gave me a striking view of this feature in his character—"I should have fallen myself into an utterly different mode of conducting the affair. But you have not the melancholy in your constitution which I have, and therefore to look for my mode of thinking in you, would be expecting what ought not to be expected. This is a strong alternative in your dispensation. Now I have long been in the habit of viewing everything

of that aspect rather in a melancholy light. You are standing on the justice, the reason, the truth of your cause. I should have heard God saying —'Son of man follow me.' It would have led me into a speculative—mystical sort of way. I should have seen in it the flood that is sweeping over the earth—the utter bankruptcy of all human affairs. Most men, if they had stood by and compared our conduct, would have commended yours as rational, but condemned mine as enthusiastic—as connecting things together which had no proper connection; but this is my way of viewing every alternative in my dispensation."

"The heart," said he, "must be divorced from its idols. Age does a great deal in curing the man of his frenzy; but, if God has a special work for a man, he takes a shorter and sharper course with him. Stand ready for it. I have been in both schools. Bleeding and cauterizing have done much for me; and age has done much also—'Can I any longer taste what I eat or what I drink?'"

Though the Memoir of Mr. Cecil's life, and the Letters which are subjoined, bear ample testimony to the tenderness of his relative affections, yet I cannot but add here what a friend wrote on visiting him, many years before his decease, at a time when he was expecting the death of Mrs. Cecil:—"Mrs. Cecil was ill. I called on Mr. Cecil. I found him in his study, sitting over his Bible in great sorrow. His tears fell so fast that he could only utter broken sentences. He said, 'Christians do well to speak of the grace, love, and goodness of God; but we must remember that he is a holy and jealous God. Judgment must begin

at the house of God. This severe stroke is but a further call to me to arise and shake myself. My hope is still firm in God. He who sends the stroke will bear me up under it; and I have no doubt but if I saw the whole of his design, I should say, 'Let her be taken!' Yet, while there is life, I cannot help saying, 'Spare her another year, that I may be a little prepared for her loss!' I know I have higher ground of comfort: but I shall deeply feel the taking away of the dying lamp. Her excellence as a wife and a mother, I am obliged to keep out of sight, or I should be overwhelmed. All I can do, is to go from text to text, as a bird from spray to spray. Our Lord said to his disciples, 'Where is your faith?' God has given her to be my comfort these many years, and shall I not trust him for the future? This is only a further and more expensive education for the work of the ministry: it is but saying more closely, 'will you pay the price?' If she should die, I shall request all my friends never once to mention her name to me. I can gather no help from what is called friendly condolence. Job's friends understood grief better, when they sat down and spake not a word."

Our departed friend was, at once, a public and a retired man. While his sacred office, exercised for many years in a conspicuous sphere brought him much before the world, his turn of mind was retired — he courted solitude — he held converse there with God, and his own great spirit mingled with the mighty dead. He had such a practical knowledge and deep impression of the nothingness of the whole world compared with spiritual

and eternal realities, and he had so deeply felt, and so thoroughly despised its lying pretensions to meet the wants and to satisfy the longings of the immortal soul, that it was no sacrifice to him to turn away from the shows and pursuits of life, and to shut out all the splendour and seductions of the world.

Yet this retired spirit was not unsocial, morose, or repulsive. No one called him from his retirement to ask spiritual counsel, but he was met with tenderness and urbanity. No congenial mind encountered his, without eliciting sparks both of benevolence and wisdom. Not a child in his family could carry its little complaints to him, but he would stop the career of his mind to listen and relieve.

His study was his favourite retreat. His station exposed him to constant interruption, some necessary and others arising from the injudiciousness of those who applied to him. It was not unusual with him to make use of his power of abstraction on these occasions. Time was too valuable to be lavished away on the inconsideration of some of those who thought it necessary to call on him. It was generally his practice, not immediately to obey a summons from his study, but when he knew he had to do with persons who would occupy much of his time by a long conversation before the business was brought forward, rather than hurt their feelings, he would carry down in his mind the train of thought which he was pursuing in his study, and, while that which was beside the purpose played on his ear, his mind was

following the subject on which it had entered before.

Some men are at home in society; the wide world is their dwelling-place; they are known and read of all men; they have a peculiar talent for improving mixed society. But this was not the character of Mr. Cecil. He unfolded himself, indeed, to his friends; but those friends could not but feel, that, when they broke in on his retirement for any other objects than what were connected with his high calling, they were intruders on inestimable time. I had, indeed, the privilege and happiness of free access to him at all times, for a considerable course of years, while I was his assistant in the ministry; but, for the reasons just assigned, though I was a diligent observer of his mind and habits, I feel myself not prepared to speak fully of his more domestic and retired character.

"Retirement," he said, "is my grand ordinance. Considerations govern me. Death is a mighty consideration with me. The utter vanity of everything under the sun is another. If a man wishes to influence my mind, he must assign considerations; and if he assigns one or two which will weigh well, I seem impatient to stop him if he is proceeding to assign more. He has given me a consideration, and that suffices. The 'Night Thoughts' is a great book with me. Notwithstanding its glaring imperfections, it realizes death and vanity. And, because this is the frame and habit of my own mind, my ministry partakes of it, and must partake of it, if I would preach naturally and from my heart."

In surveying the personal character of Mr. Cecil, it remains to speak somewhat more fully of his intellectual powers.

His imagination was not so much of the playful and elegant, as bold, inventive, striking, and instinctively judicious and discriminating.

His taste in the sister arts of painting, poetry, and music was refined, and his judgment learned. In his younger days he had studied and excelled in painting and music; and, though he laid them aside that he might devote all his powers to his work, yet the savour of them so far remained, that I have been witness innumerable times, both in public and private, to the felicity of his illustrations drawn from these subjects, and to the superiority that his intimate knowledge of them gave him over most persons with whom they happened to be brought forward. His taste, when young, was for Italian music; but, in his latter years, he was fond of the German style, or rather the softer Moravian. Anthems, or any pieces wherein the words were reiterated, he disliked, for public worship especially, as they sacrificed the real spirit of devotion too much to the music. His feelings on this subject were exquisite. "Pure, spiritual, sublime devotion," he would say, "should be the soul of public music." He often lamented the introduction of any other style of architecture in places of worship, beside that which was so peculiarly appropriate, and which, because it was so, called up associations best suited to the purposes of meeting. He said most strikingly—"I never enter a Gothic church, without feeling myself impressed with something of this idea—

within these walls has been resounding for centuries, by successive generations, 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!' The very damp that trickles down the walls, and the unsightly green that moulders upon the pillars, are far more pleasing to me from their associations, than the trim, finished, classic, heathen piles of the present fashion."

His powers of comparison, analogy, and judgment have been rarely equalled. These had been exercised so long and with so much energy on all the conditions and relations around him—on the word of God—on his own mind—on the history, opinions, passions, prejudices, and motives of men in every age, and of every character and station—on moral causes and effects—on every subject that can come within the grasp of a philosophic mind—that the result was a wisdom so prominent and commanding, that every man felt himself with a mind of the very first order both in capability and acquirement. In some cases, wherein my wishes, perhaps, formed my opinions, and, trying to hide the truth from myself, I have asked his opinion as a confirmation of my own—he has unmasked my heart to itself, by his wise and searching replies. His decisions were more according to circumstances than in most men; and when he gave them, it would generally be with a declaration that other circumstances might wholly change the aspect of the thing; and he did this in such a manner—if I may judge by my own case—as often to make a man look about him, and bethink himself what a treacherous and blind party he had to transact with in his bosom.

To those who did not know him intimately, he might sometimes appear to want a quickness of perception. The appearance of this faculty is often assumed, where God has not given it. Where the mind does decide rapidly, its conclusions are generally partial and defective, in proportion to their rapidity. Intuition is not a faculty of the present condition of being, whatever it may be of that toward which we are advancing. He affected no such quality, yet he possessed more of it than most men. When he did not fully understand what was addressed to him, he said so; and his mind was so familiar with the difficulty of discovering the truth through the veils and shades thrown over her by prejudice and self-love, that he did not hastily bring himself to think that he possessed your full meaning.

His good sense and wisdom led him to avoid all peculiarity and eccentricity. He was decidedly adverse to every thing of this nature. "When anything peculiar appears," he would say, "in a religious man's manners, or dress, or furniture, this is supposed by the world to constitute his religion. A clergyman indeed is allowed by common consent, and indeed it is but decent in him, to have everything about him plain and substantial, rather than ornamental and fashionable."

The personal character of Mr. Cecil had a manifest influence on his ministerial. We find him frequently accounting for those views and feelings which prevailed in his ministry, by a reference to his constitution and his early history.

His sentiments on the ministerial office are scattered through his writings, as this was ever present

to his mind. Wherever he was, and whatever was his employment, he was always the Christian minister. He was ever on the watch to do the work of an evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry.

I have collected together his thoughts on this subject in some sections of his "Remains;" and I think it impossible that any young minister should read these thoughts, without imbibing a higher estimation of his sacred office. More will be found on these points in the following views of his ministerial character, gathered from his own lips.

These views were most striking and sublime. "A minister is a Levite. In general, he has, and he is to have, no inheritance among his brethren. Other men are not Levites. They must recur to means, from which a minister has no right to expect anything. Their affairs are all the little transactions of this world. But a minister is called and set apart for a high and sublime business. His transactions are to be between the living and the dead—between heaven and earth; and he must stand as with wings on his shoulders. He must look, therefore, for everything in his affairs to be done for him and before his eyes. I am at a loss to conceive how a minister, with right feeling, can plot and contrive for a living. If he is told that there is such a thing for him if he will make such an application, and that it is to be so obtained and so only, all is well—but not a step further. It is in vain, however, to put any man on acting in this manner, if he be not a Levite in principle and in character. These must

be the expressions of a nature communicated to him from God—a high principle of faith begetting simplicity. He must be an eagle towering toward heaven on strong pinions. The barn-door hen must continue to scratch her grains out of the dunghill."

He thought that the life of a minister, with respect to worldly affairs, ought to be peculiarly above that of other men, a life of faith. It was his maxim, to lay out no money unnecessarily—and, with this principle, he regarded his purse as in God's hands, and found it like the barrel of meal and the cruise of oil. He confessed that he could advise this conduct in no case but in that of a Christian minister, who was a wise and prudent, as well as right-hearted manager of his affairs. His habit was to be the child of simplicity and faith—acting as a servant of God, on those principles which he judged most suitable to his character and station.

He had exalted ideas of ministerial authority—not the authority which results merely from office, but from office united with personal character—not the claims of priestly arrogance, but the claims of priestly dignity. "I never choose to forget that I am a priest, because I would not deprive myself of the right to dictate in my ministerial capacity. I cannot allow a man, therefore, to come to me merely as a friend, on his spiritual affairs, because I should have no authority to say to him, 'Sir, you must do so and so.' I cannot suffer my best friends to dictate to me in anything which concerns my ministerial duties. I have often had to encounter this spirit; and there would

be no end of it, if I did not check and resist it. I plainly tell them that they know nothing of the matter. I ask them if it is decent, that a man immersed in other concerns should pretend to know my affairs and duties better than myself, who, as they ought to believe, make them the study of my life. I have been disgusted—deeply disgusted—at the manner in which some men of flaming religious profession talk of certain preachers. They estimate them just as Garrick would have estimated the worth of players, or as Handel would have arranged an orchestra. 'Such an one is clever—he is a master.'—Clever!—a master!—Worth, and character, and dignity are of no weight in the scale."

These views are just and noble; and they are suited to his own great mind, and the entire hold which his office had on his heart. But, listening with his whole soul to that injunction, Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them—it may be doubted whether he did not sometimes challenge to his office more respect than the party concerned could be expected to allow due.

Mr. Cecil's preparation and training for this exalted office have been already spoken of in the view of his personal character. This was, as has been seen, of no common kind.

His qualifications for the discharge of the ministry were peculiar. The great natural powers which God had given him, were moulded and matured by the training and discipline through which he was led, and were consecrated by grace to the service of his Master. It will not be requisite to recapitulate what has been said on this subject.

I shall here speak only of those qualifications which were more appropriate to him as a public teacher.

His learning consisted more in the knowledge of other men's ideas, than in an accurate acquaintance with the niceties of the languages. Yet he was better acquainted with these, than many who devote a disproportionate time to this acquisition. His incessant application, chiefly by candle-light, when at Oxford, to the study of Greek, of which he was enthusiastically fond, brought on an almost total loss of sight for six months. He had determined to become a perfect master of the niceties of that refined and noble language. The counsel, however, which he received from Dr. Bacon, and which is recorded in his "Remains," under the head of "Miscellaneous Remarks on the Christian Ministry," put him on proportioning his attention more according to the future utility of his pursuits than he had been accustomed to. "I was struck with his advice," he said; "I had an unsettled sort of religion, but enough to make me see and choose the truth which he set before me."

So solid and extensive was Mr. Cecil's real learning, that there were no important points, in morals or religion, on which he had not read the best authors, and made up his mind on the most mature deliberation; nor could any topic be started in history or philosophy, on subjects of art or of science, with which he was not found more generally acquainted than other men. But while he could lay these parts of learning under contribution to aid him in his one object of impressing

truth on man, he was a master in the learning which is more peculiarly appropriate to his profession. He was so much in the habit of daily reading the Scriptures in the originals, that as he told me, he went to this employ naturally and insensibly. He limited himself to no stated quantity; but, as his time allowed, he read one or two, and sometimes five or six chapters daily.

Mr. Cecil had the power of exciting and preserving attention above most men. All his effort was directed, first to engage attention, and then to repay it; to allure curiosity, and then to gratify it.

Till the attention was gained he felt that nothing could be effected on the mind. Sometimes he would have recourse to unusual methods, suited indeed to his auditory, to awaken and fix their minds. "I was once preaching," he said, "a charity-sermon where the congregation was very large, and chiefly of the lower order. I found it impossible by my usual method of preaching, to gain their attention. It was in the afternoon, and my hearers seemed to meet nothing in my preaching, which was capable of rousing them out of the stupefaction of a full dinner. Some lounged, and some turned their backs on me. 'I must have attention,' I said to myself. 'I will be heard'—the case was desperate; and, in despair, I sought a desperate remedy. I exclaimed aloud, 'last Monday morning a man was hanged at Tyburn'—instantly the face of things was changed! All was silence and expectation! I caught their ear, and retained it through the sermon." This anecdote leads me to observe that

Mr. Cecil had, in an unusual degree, the talent of adapting his ministry to his congregation. While he was, for instance, preaching on the same day at Lothbury, at St. John's morning and afternoon, and at Spitalfields in the evening—he found four congregations at these places, in many respects, quite distinct from one another; and yet he adapted his preaching, with admirable skill, to meet their habits of thinking.

But when he had gained the attention, he was ever on the watch not to weary it. He seemed to have continually before his eyes the sentiments of our great critic and moralist:* "Tediousness is the most fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are single and local, but tediousness pervades the whole; other faults are censured and forgotten; but the power of tediousness propagates itself. He that is weary the first hour, is more weary the second; as bodies forced into motion, contrary to their tendency, pass more and more slowly through every successive interval of space." Mr. Cecil would say, "You have a certain quantity of attention to work on: make the best use of it while it lasts. The iron will cool, and then nothing, or worse than nothing is done. If a preacher will leave unsaid all vain repetitions, and watch against undue length in his entrance and width in his discussion, he may limit a written sermon to half an hour, and one from notes to forty minutes; and this time he should not allow himself to exceed, except on special occasions."

His power of illustration was great and versa-

* Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

tile. His topics were chiefly taken from Scripture and from life. His manner of illustrating his subjects by Scripture examples, was the most finished I ever heard. They were never introduced violently or abruptly; but his matter was so moulded in preparation for them, by a few well turned sentences, that the illustration seemed to be placed in the Scripture almost for the sake of the doctrine. The general features of the character or history were left in the back ground, and those only which were appropriate to the matter in hand were brought forward, and were thus presented, with great force, to the mind. His talent in discriminating the striking features, and connecting them with his matter, was so peculiar, that the histories of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, and of Paul, seemed in his hands, to be ever new, and to be exhaustless treasures of illustration.

The turn both of his mind and of his experience seemed to lead him to this method. What he did, therefore, with ease and feeling, it was natural should be done frequently; and, accordingly, I have scarcely ever heard a sermon from him in which there were not repeated exercises of this peculiar talent; and in some sermons almost the entire subject has been treated in this manner.

This talent of illustrating his subjects, and particularly of seizing incidents for improvement, gave an edge to his wise admonitions in private; and fixed them deep in the memory. Riding with a friend on a very windy day, the dust was so troublesome, that his companion wished they were at their journey's end, where they might ride in the fields free from dust; and this wish he repeated

more than once while on the road. When they reached the fields, the flies so teazed his friend's horse, that he could scarcely keep his seat on the saddle. On his bitterly complaining, "Ah! sir," said Mr. Cecil, "when you were in the road, the dust was your only trouble, and all your anxiety was to get into the fields; you forgot that the fly was there! Now this is a true picture of human life; and you will find it so in all the changes you make in future. We know the trials of our present situation: but the next will have trials, and perhaps worse, though they may be of a different kind."

At another time, the same friend said he should esteem it as a favour, if he would tell him of anything which he might in future see in his conduct which he thought improper. "Well, sir," he said, "many a man has directed the watchman to call him early in the morning, and has then appeared very anxious for his coming early; but the watchman has come before he has been ready for him! I have seen many people very desirous of being told their faults; but I have seen very few who were pleased when they received the information. However, I like to receive an invitation, and I have no reason to suppose you will be displeased till I see it so. I shall therefore remember that you have asked for it."

His style, particularly in preaching and in free conversation, was easy and natural. If he ever laboured his expression, it was in search of emphasis, rather than precision—of words which would penetrate the soul, rather than round his period, and float in the ear. He considered that vigorous

conceptions would clothe themselves in the fittest expressions—

Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.

or, as Milton has admirably said—"True eloquence I find to be none, but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that, whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them to others, when such a man would speak, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

His written style has less ease than that of his conversation or preaching. He excelled rather in strong intuitive sense, than in a train of arguments; and more in the liveliness of his thoughts, than in their arrangement. He would put down his thoughts as they arose—often at separate times, and as suggested by the occasion—and was not always nice in rejecting obsolete expressions, or antithesis in sense. This occasioned a want of flow and ease in many parts of his writings, which was obviated by the warmth of conversation or preaching.

Impression was the leading feature of his ministry. Perhaps the information conveyed by it to the mind was not sufficiently systematic and minute. He had seen so much the evil of spending the preacher's time in doctrinal statements, that possibly there was some deficiency in this respect in his own practice. When, indeed, he had to

introduce religion to his congregations at St. John's or Chobham, on his first entering on those charges, he dealt with them as a people needing information on first principles; but my remark applies to the habit and course of his ministry. For, however true it is, that, when a man becomes a serious reader of God's word, he must grow in the knowledge of the truth; yet many will still read the Bible with an indiscriminating mind, unless their minister's statements give them, not only a lucid general view of doctrines, but somewhat of a systematic and connected view; and not a few—buried in the cares of the world—will derive all their notions of the system of divine truth from what they hear in public.

Mr. Cecil wrote and spoke to mankind. He dealt with the business and bosoms of men. An energy of truth prevailed in his ministry, which roused the conscience; and a benevolence reigned in his spirit, which seized the heart; yet I much question whether the prevailing effect of his preaching was not determination grounded on conviction and admiration, rather than on emotion. When in perfect health and spirits, and master of his subject, his eloquence was finished and striking; but, though there was often a tenderness which awakened corresponding feelings in the hearer, yet his eloquence wanted that vehement passion, which overpowers and carries away the minds of others.

> —si vis me flere, dolendum est
> Primum ipsi tibi———.

This is the great secret for getting hold of the heart. But as not much of the impassioned en-

tered into the composition of his nature, and he was at the same time pre-eminent in genius and judgment, it could not but follow that admiration should affect the hearer more frequently than strong feeling. A friend has told me that he has often lost the benefit of the truth which Mr. Cecil has uttered, in admiration of the exquisite manner in which it was conveyed. And I have again and again detected this in myself; and found I have been watching eagerly for what would fall next from him, not in the spirit of a new born babe that desires the sincere milk of the word that I might grow thereby, but for the gratification of a mental voluptuousness. I desire no one will suppose that I impute to him any of the studied artifices of eloquence. No man sought more than he did that his hearers' faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. No man more sincerely aimed to have his speech and his preaching, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power; yet, moreover, because the preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order the messages of divine mercy. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, yet that which was written was upright, even words of truth. He could not but treat his subjects in this exquisite manner, while his taste, his genius, and his nature remained; yet this could not but be sanctified to his Master's honour, while he retained the perfect integrity, the deep conviction, and the singleness of eye which his Master had given him. That it was the furthest possible from trick and artifice

might be seen in his most familiar conversation; where his manner, when he was fully called out, was exactly what it was in the pulpit. His mind grasped every subject firmly; his imagination clothed it with images—embodied it—gave it life —called up numberless associations and illustrations. It was realized; it was present to him; his taste and judgment enabled him to seize it in the most striking points of view.

"His apprehensions of religion," Mr. Wilson most justly observes, "were grand and elevated. His fine powers governed by divine grace, were exactly calculated to seize all the grandeur of the gospel. The stupendous magnitude of the objects which the Bible proposes to man, the incomparable sublimity of eternal pursuits, the astonishing scheme of redemption by an incarnate Mediator, the native grandeur of a rational and immortal being stamped with the impress of God, the fall of this being into sin, and poverty, and meanness, and guilt, his recovery by grace to more than his original dignity in the love and service of his Creator, filled all his soul. He seemed often to labour with an imagination occupied with his noble theme. He felt, and he taught, that no other subject was worthy the consideration of man. In comparison with it, he led his auditors to condemn and trample on all the petty objects of this lower world. Its meanness, its uncertainty, its deceit, its vanity, its vexation, its nothingness, he set fully in their view. He even made them look down with a generous concern on those who were buried in its interests, and who forgot, amidst the toys of children, the real business of life.

Some of his printed sermons are perfect models of simplicity, vivacity, and effect; that, for instance, on the "Power of Faith."

His countenance, though not modeled altogether after the artificial rules of beauty, beamed in animated conversation and in the pulpit, with the beauty of a great and noble mind. Dignity and benevolence were strongly portrayed there. The variety of its expression was admirable; nor could any one feel the full force of the soul which he threw into his discourses, if this expression was concealed from him by distance or situation. His action was graceful and forcible; latterly, owing perhaps to his increasing infirmities and almost uninterrupted pain, it discovered, I think, some constraint and want of ease.

There was a familiarity and an authority in his manner which to strangers sometimes appeared dogmatism. His manner was, in truth, like that of no other man. It was altogether original; and because it was original, it sometimes offended those who had no other idea of manner than of that to which they had been accustomed. Yet even the prejudiced could not hear him with indifference. There was a dignity and command, a decision and energy, a knowledge of the heart and the world, an uprightness of mind and a desire to do good, and all this united with a tenderness and affection, which few could witness without some favourable impressions.

His most striking sermons were generally those, which he preached from very short texts, such as—"My soul followeth hard after thee"—"All my springs are in thee"—"O Lord! teach me thy

way"—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." In these sermons, the whole subject had probably struck him at once; and what comes in this way is generally found to be more natural and forcible, than what the mind is obliged to excogitate by its own laborious efforts. As the subject grows out of the state of the mind at the time, there is that degree of affinity between them which occasions the mind to seize it forcibly, and to clothe it with vivid colours. A train of the most natural associations presents itself, as one link draws with it its kindred links. The attention is engaged—the mind is concentrated—Scripture and life present themselves without effort, in the most natural relations which they bear to the subject that has full possession of the man, and composition becomes easy, and even interesting.

It was a frequent and very useful method with him, to open and explain his subject in a very brief manner, and then to draw inferences from it; which inferences formed the great body of the sermon, and were rather matters of address to the consciences and hearts of his hearers, than of discussion; so that the whole subject was a kind of application. This seems to me to have been his most effective manner of preaching. Take an instance: Matt. xviii. 20. I. Explain the words. II. Raise from them two or three remarks: Contemplate: 1. The glory and Godhead of our Master: 2. The honour which he puts on his house and the assembly of his saints: 3. The privilege of being one of Christ's servants whom he will meet: 4. The obligations lying on such servants—What manner of servants ought such to be?

He was remarkably observant of character. When I have asked his opinion of a person, he has frequently surprised me with such a full and accurate delineation of him, as he could have obtained only by a very patient and penetrating observation. The reason of this appeared, when I learnt that it was his custom in his sermon notes, when he wished to describe a particular character, not to put down its chief features as they occurred to his mind from the general observations which he had made on men; but he would put down the initial, of some person's name with whom he was well acquainted, and who stood in his mind as the representative of that class of characters. He had nothing to do then, when he came to enlarge on that part of his subject, but strongly to realize to himself the person in question, and he would draw a much more vivid picture of a real character than he could otherwise do.*

Mr. Cecil was not himself led to the knowledge of God through great terrors of conscience; his ministry did not, therefore, so much abound in delineations of the workings and malignity of sin, as in those topics which grew out of his course of experience; nor did he enter frequently or largely

* Lavater somewhere mentions an admirable practice of his own, which carried our friend's principle into constant use in his ministry. He fixed on certain persons in his congregation, whom he considered as representatives of the respective classes into which his hearers might be properly divided—amounting, as I recollect, to seven. In composing his discourses, he kept each of these persons steadily in his eye; and laboured so to mould his subject as to meet the case of every one—by which incomparable rule he rendered himself intelligible and interesting to all classes of his flock.

into the details of the spiritual conflict. He was himself drawn to God, and subdued by a sense of divine mercy and friendship; he was led, therefore, to detail largely the transactions of the believing mind with God, in the exercise of dependence and submission.

He was more aware than most men of the difficulty of bringing down the truth to the comprehension of the mass of hearers. A young minister may leave college with the best theory in the world, and he may take with him into a country parish a determination to talk in the language of simplicity itself; but the actual capacity to make himself understood and felt is so far removed from his former habits, that it is only to be acquired by experience. Hear how wisely Mr. Cecil wrote to a young friend about to take orders: "I advised him, since he was so near his entrance into the ministry, to lay aside all other studies for the present, but the one I should now recommend to him. I would have him select some very poor and uninformed persons, and pay them a visit. His object should be to explain to them, and demonstrate the truth of the solar system. He should first of all set himself to make that system perfectly intelligible to them, and then he should demonstrate it to their full conviction against all the followers of Tycho Brahe, or any one else could say against it. He would tell me it was impossible; they would not understand a single term. Impossible to make them astronomers! And shall it be thought an easy matter to make them understand redemption?"

He gave the following account of his habit of preparation for the pulpit:—

"I generally look into the portions of Scripture appointed by the church to be read in the services of the day. I watch, too, for any new light which may be thrown on passages in the course of reading, conversation, or prayer. I seize the occasions furnished by my own experience—my state of mind—my family occurrences. Subjects taken up in this manner are always likely to meet the cases and wants of some persons in the congregation. Sometimes, however, I have no text prepared; and I have found this to arise generally from sloth; I go to work; this is the secret; make it a business; something will arise where least expected.

"It is important to begin preparation early. If it is driven off late, accidents may occur which may prevent due attention to the subject. If the latter days of the week are occupied, and the mind driven into a corner, the sermon will usually be raw and undigested. Take time to reject what ought to be rejected, and to supply what ought to be supplied. It is a favourite method with me, to reduce the text to some point of doctrine. On that topic I enlarge, and then apply it. I like to ask myself—'What are you doing?—What is your aim?'

"I will not forestall my own views by first going to commentators. I talk over the subject to myself; I write down all that strikes me: and then I arrange what is written. After my plan is settled, and my mind has exhausted its stores, then I would turn to some of my great doctors to see if I am in no error: but I find it necessary to reject many good things which the doctors say; they will tell

to no good effect in a sermon. In truth, to be effective, we must draw more from nature, and less from the writings of men; we must study the book of Providence, the book of nature, the heart of man, and the book of God; we must read the history of the world; we must deal with matters of fact before our eyes."

In respect to mechanical preparation, Mr. Cecil was in the habit of using eight quarto pages, on which he put down his main and subordinate divisions, with such hints as he thought requisite. These notes, written in an open and legible manner, such as his eye could catch with ease, he put into one of the portable quarto Bibles, of which several editions were printed in the seventeenth century, in a good type, but, in consequence of the closeness and excellence of the paper, such as bind up in a very compact size. Of these editions, there are some* which are printed page for page with another; and one of these editions Mr. Cecil was in the constant habit of using both in public and private, from the mechanical assistance afforded to him in turning to passages from the recollection of the part of the page in which they occurred.

It will be interesting to hear Mr. Cecil's own account of his manner of commencing his ministry; as it notices mistakes from which he was not only early, but most effectually delivered, and his remarks on them may afford a serious caution to others.

"I set out," he said, "with levity in the pulpit.

* I have compared four of these Bibles, viz., Field's, London, 1648,—Haye's, Camb. 1670, and also that of 1677—and Buck's, Camb. without date.

It was above two years before I could get the victory over it, though I strove under sharp piercings of conscience. My plan was wrong. I had bad counsellors. I thought preaching was only entering the pulpit, and letting off a sermon. I really imagined this was trusting to God, and doing the thing cleverly. I talked with a wise and pious man on the subject. 'There is nothing,' said he, 'like appealing to facts.' We sat down and named names. We found men in my habit disreputable. This first set my mind right. I saw such a man might sometimes succeed; but I saw, at the same time, that whoever would succeed in his general interpretations of the Scripture, and would have his ministry that of a workman that needeth not be ashamed—must be a laborious man. What can be produced by men who refuse this labour? —a few raw notions, harmless perhaps in themselves, but false as stated by them. What then should a young minister do? His office says, 'Go to your books. Go to retirement. Go to prayer.' 'No,' says the enthusiast, 'Go to preach. Go and be a witness!' A witness!—of what? He don't know!"

Thus qualified by nature, education, and grace—enriched by his various manly acquisitions—and matured by experience, he appeared in the pulpit unquestionably as one of the first preachers—perhaps the very first preacher of his time.

He was sincerely attached to the church of England, both by principle and feeling—to her order and decorum. He entered into the spirit of those obligations, which lay on him as a clergyman; and, looking at the general consequences, would

never break through the order and discipline of the church, to obtain any particular, local, and temporary ends.

In the more private exercise of his pastoral office, as a counsellor and friend, he manifested great faithfulness, tenderness, and wisdom. In proof of this I might appeal to what is said in the "Remains," on the subject of "visiting death-beds." I shall here subjoin a few more illustrations of this part of his character. An interview was contrived between him and a noble lady, by some of her relations. She began to listen to the affairs of religion. Her life had been gay and trifling. She knew that he understood her situation; and she began to introduce her case by saying, that she supposed he thought her a very contemptible and wicked creature. "No, madam, I do not look at you in that view. I consider that you have been a wanderer; pursuing happiness in a mistaken road—an immortal being fluttering through the present short but important scene, without one serious concern for what is to come, after it is passed by. And, while others know what is to happen to them, and wait for it, you are totally ignorant of the subject." "But, sir, is it possible to arrive at any certainty with respect to a future condition?" "Why, what little trifling scenes would occupy your ladyship and myself, if we were confined to this small spot of a carpet that is under our feet! The world is a little, mean, despicable scene in itself. But we must leave it; and can you suppose that we are left to step into another state, as into a dark abyss—not knowing what awaits us there? No—the next step I

take from the world, is not into a void that no one has explored—a fathomless abyss—a chaos of clouds and darkness—but I know what it is—I am assured of it." He said to me in reporting this conversation, "I rested on this, and left it to work on her mind. I thought it better to defer the subject of this assurance to try her, and I have reason to believe that she feels anxious for our next occasion of meeting, that she may hear how we can make out the grounds of our assurance." This is one among many instances of the wise methods in which he accommodated his instructions to the character.

"Many of my people," he said, "and especially females, talk thus to me—'I am under continual distress of mind. I can lay hold of no permanent ground of peace. If I seem to get a little, it is soon gone again. I am out at sea, without compass or anchor. My heart sinks. My spirit faints. My knees tremble. All is dark above, and all is horror beneath.' 'And pray, what is your mode of life?' 'I sit by myself.' 'In this small room, I suppose, and over your fire?' 'A considerable part of my time.' 'And what time do you go to bed?' 'I cannot retire till two or three o'clock in the morning.' 'And you lie late, I suppose, in the morning?' 'Frequently.' 'And pray what else can you expect from this mode of life, than a relaxed and unstrung system; and, of course, a mind enfeebled, anxious, and disordered? I understand your case. God seems to have qualified me to understand it, by especial dispensations. My natural disposition is gay, volatile, spirited. My nature would never sink. But I have some-

times felt my spirit absorbed in horrible apprehensions, without any assignable natural cause. Perhaps it was necessary I should be suffered to feel this, that I might feel for others; for, certainly, no man can have any adequate sympathy with others, who has never thus suffered himself. I can feel for you, therefore, while I tell you that I think the affair with you is chiefly physical. I myself have brought on the same feelings by the same means. I have sat in my study till I have persuaded myself that the ceiling was too low to suffer me to rise and stand upright; and air and exercise alone could remove the impression from my mind!'"

His taking the charge of St. John's Chapel is the most important event of his life, as it appears to have been the sphere for which he was peculiarly raised up and prepared by Providence. The circumstances attending his establishment of a serious and devout congregation in this place, mark the strength and simplicity of his mind; while they may show the necessity under which such men will sometimes be brought, of acting for themselves, with perfect independence of the whole body of their brethren.

These circumstances he related to me as follows: "When I married, I lived at a small house at Islington, situated in the midst of a garden, for which I paid 14*l.* a year. My annual income was then only 80*l.*, and, with this, I had to support myself, my wife, and a servant. I was then, indeed, minister of St. John's, but I received nothing from the place for several of the earlier years. When I was sent thither, I consi-

dered that I was sent to the people of that place and neighbourhood. I thought it my duty, therefore, to adopt a system and a style of preaching which should have a tendency to meet their case. All which they had heard before, was dry, frigid, and lifeless. A high, haughty, stalking spirit characterized the place. I was thrown among men of the world, men of business, men of reading, and men of thought. I began, therefore, with principles. I preached on the divine authority of the sacred Scriptures. I dissected Saurin's Sermons. I took the sinews and substance of some of our most masterly writers. I preached on such texts as—'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' I set myself to explain terms and phrases. My chief object was underground work. But what was the consequence of this? An outcry was raised against me throughout the religious world. It was said, that, at other places, I continued to speak the truth; but that, at St. John's, I was sacrificing it to my hearers. Even my brethren, instead of entering into my reasons and plan, lay on their oars. My protectress turned her back on me. I hesitated, at first, to enter on so great a risk; but, with grandeur of spirit, she told me she would put her fortune on the issue: if any benefit resulted from it, it should be mine, and she would bear me harmless of all loss. She heard me a few times, and then wholly withdrew herself, and even took away her servants. Some of them would now and then steal in; but as they reported that they got 'no food,' the report did but strengthen the prejudices of their mistress. She

could not enter into my motives. I was obliged to regard her conduct as Huss did that of the man who was heaping the faggots round him, *O sancta simplicitas!* She could not calculate consequences, and was unmoved even when I placed my conduct in its strongest light—'Can you attribute any but the purest motives to me? Ought not the very circumstances to which I voluntarily subject myself by adhering to the plan you condemn, to gain me some credit for my intentions? Had I preached here in the manner I preached elsewhere, you know that the place would have been crowded by the religious world. I should then have obtained from it an income of 200*l.* or 300*l.* a year, whereas I now sit down with little or no advantage from it, though I have a family rising up about me. God sent me hither to preach to this people, and to raise a congregation in this place; and I am proceeding in that system and way, which seems to me best adapted under God to meet the states of this people; and while I am doing this, I bring on myself temporal injury. I can have no possible motive to sacrifice the truth to a few blind Pharisees, who will never while I live become my friends.'

"I laboured under this desertion of my friends for a long time: it was about seven years, before affairs began to wear such an aspect, that my protectress and others allowed that matters had certainly turned out as they could not have foreseen. Several witnesses rose up of undoubted and authentic character, to testify the power of the grace of God. One circumstance will place the prejudice which existed against me in a strong light.

A converted Jewess, who had been driven from her father's house on account of her sentiments, and was a woman of great simplicity and devotion, refused to accompany a friend to St. John's, because, as she said, she could not worship there spiritually, and rather chose to spend the afternoon among her friend's books; in which employment, I doubt not, she worshipped God in the spirit, and was accepted of him. For my own satisfaction, I wrote down at large the reasons on which I had formed my conduct, for I was almost driven into my own breast for support and justification. One friend, indeed, stood by me. He saw my plan and entered fully into it; and said such strong things on the subject as greatly confirmed my own mind. 'The Church of Christ,' said he, 'must sometimes be sacrificed for Christ.' A certain brother preached a charity sermon; and in such a style, that he seemed to say to me, 'Were I here, you would see how I would do the thing,' What good he did, I know not; but some of the evil I know, as several persons forsook the chapel, and assigned his sermon as the reason; and others expressed themselves alarmed at the idea of Methodism having crept into the place. It was ill-judged and unkind. He should have entered into my design, or have been silent."

About the middle of July, 1800, Mr. Cecil entered on the livings of Bisley and Chobham in Surry. A few weeks after this I visited him with our dear and mutual friend Dr. Fearon. Here I saw him in a quite different situation from any in which I had seen him before, and was not a little curious to remark the manner in which he would

treat a set of plain and homely villagers. Though he was repeatedly in great anguish during the day which we passed with him, yet his mind, in the intervals, was so vigorous and luminous, that I have scarcely ever gathered so much from him in an equal time.

On this occasion, among other things which are recorded in his "Remains," he stated to us his views and feelings respecting his new charge. "Bisley is a rectory. It is completely out of the world. The farmers in these parts are mostly occupiers of their own land. They crowded round me when I first came, and were eager to make bargains with me for the tithe. I told them I was ignorant of such matters, but that I would propose a measure which none of them could object to. The farmers of Bisley should nominate three farmers of Chobham parish; and whatever those three Chobham farmers should appoint me to receive, that they should pay. This was putting myself into their power indeed, but the one grand point with me was to conciliate their minds, and pave the way for the gospel in these parishes. And so far it answered my purpose. I had desired the three farmers to throw the weight, in dubious cases, into the farmers' scale. After we had settled the business, one of the three, to convince the Bisley farmers that they had acted in the very spirit of my directions, proposed to find a person who would immediately give them 50*l.* a year for their bargain with me. This has given them an idea that we act upon high and holy motives."

What a noble trait is this of his upright and disinterested mind! One might almost with con-

fidence predict that such an introduction into his parishes was a presage of great usefulness. A minister has no right to wanton away the support of his family; but, having secured that, whatever sacrifices he may make with such holy motives as these, will be abundantly repaid; probably in the success of his ministry, certainly in his Master's approbation and the peace of his own bosom. Those sacrifices of what may be strictly his due, which a narrow and wordly man may refuse to make, though he entail discord and feuds on his parish, will be trifles to the mind of a true Christian minister.

"I hardly think it likely that a man could have been received in a more friendly manner than I have been. About 500 people attended at Chobham, and 300 at Bisley. I find I can do anything with them while I am serious. A Baptist preacher had been somewhere in the neighbourhood before I came. He seems to have been wild and eccentric, and to have planted a prejudice in consequence of this in the people's minds, who appear to have had no other notion of Methodism than that it was eccentricity.

"While I am grave and serious they will allow me to say or do anything. For instance: a few Sundays since it rained so prodigiously hard when I had finished my sermon at Bisley, that I saw it was impracticable for anybody to leave the church. I then told the people, that as it was likely to continue for some time, we had better employ ourselves as well as we could, and so I would take up the subject again. I did so; and they listened to me readily for another half-hour, though I had

preached to them three-quarters of an hour before I had concluded. All this they bear, and think it nothing strange; but one wild brother, with one eccentric sermon would do me more mischief than I should be able in many months to cure."

A very strong instance of personal attachment to him occurred soon after he took Chobham. A stranger was observed to attend church every Sunday, and to leave the village immediately after service was over. Every new face there was a phenomenon, and of course the appearance of this man led to inquiry. He was found to be one of his hearers at St. John's—a poor, working-man, whom the advantages received under his ministry had so knit to his pastor, that he found himself repaid for a weekly journey of fifty miles. Mr. Cecil remonstrated with him on the inexpediency and impropriety of thus spending the Sabbath, when the pure word of God might be heard so much nearer home.

But we must approach the closing scene of this great man's life and labours. No touches need to be added to the affecting picture which Mrs. Cecil has drawn of his gradual descent to the grave. I will only subjoin here some remarks on his views and feelings with respect to that Gospel of which he had been so long an eminent and successful minister. His views of Christianity were modified, as has been seen, by his constitution, and the circumstances of his life. His dispensation was to meet a particular class of hearers. He was fitted beyond most men, to assert the reality, dignity, and glory of religion—as contrasted with the vanity, meanness, and glare of the world. This

subject he treated like a master. Men of the world felt that they were in the presence of their superior—of one who unmasked their real misery to themselves and pursued them through all the false refuges of vain and carnal minds.

While this was the principal character of Mr. Cecil's ministry for years, at that place for which he seems to have been specially prepared; yet he was elsewhere, with equal wisdom, leading experienced christians forward in their way to heaven; and, latterly, the habit of his own mind, and the whole system of his ministry, were manifestly ripening in those views which are peculiar to the gospel.

No man had a more just view of his own ministry than he had; nor could any one more highly value the excellence which he saw in others, though it was of a different class from his own. "I have been lately selecting," he said to me, "some of C—'s letters for publication. With the utmost difficulty, I have given some little variety. He begins with Jesus Christ, carries him through, and closes with him. If a broken leg or arm turns him aside, he seems impatient to dismiss it as an intrusive subject, and to get back again to his topic. I feel as I read his letters—'Why you said this in the last sentence! What, over and over again! What, nothing else! No variety of view! No illustration!' And yet, I confess, that, when I have walked out, and my mind has been a good deal exercised on his letters, I have caught a sympathy—'It is one thing, without variety or relief; but this one thing is a talisman!'—I have raised my head—I have trod firmly—my heart has

expanded—I have felt wings! Men must not be viewed indiscriminately. To a certain degree I produce effect in my way, and with my views. The utter ruin and bankruptcy of man is so wrought into my experience, that I handle this subject naturally. Other men may use God's more direct means as naturally as I can use his more indirect and collateral ones. Every man, however, must rather follow than lead his experience; though, to a certain degree, if he finds his habits diverting him from Jesus Christ as the grand, prominent, only feature, he must force himself to choose such topics as shall lead his mind to him. I am obliged to subject myself to this discipline. I frequently choose subjects and enter into my plan, before I discover that the Saviour occupies a part too subordinate: I throw them away, and take up others which point more directly and naturally to him."

In his last illness, he spoke with great feeling on the same subject: "That christianity may be very sincere, which is not sublime. Let a man read Maclaurin's sermon on the Cross of Christ, and enter into the subject with taste and relish, what beggary is the world to him! The subject is so high and so glorious, that a man must go out of himself, as it were, to apprehend it. The apostle had such a view when he said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." I remember the time, even after I became really serious in religion, when I could not understand what St. Paul meant—not by setting forth the glory of Christ, but by talking of it in such hyperbolical terms, and always dwelling on the subject. Whatever topic he began

on, I saw that he could not but glide into the same subject. But I now understand why he did so, and wonder no more: for there is no other subject, comparatively, worthy of our thoughts, and therefore it is that advanced christians dwell on little else. I am fully persuaded, that the whole world becomes vain and empty to a man, in proportion as he enters into living views of Jesus Christ."

His feelings on religion, as they respected his submission to the divine will, were admirably expressed by himself: "We are servants, and we must not choose our station. I am now called to go down very low, but I must not resist. God is saying to me, 'You have not been doing my work in my way: you have been too hasty. Now sit down, and be content to be a quiet idler; and wait till I give you leave again to go on in your labours.'"

In respect to his personal comfort, he had said: "I have attained satisfaction as to my state, by a consciousness of change in my own breast, mixed with a consciousness of integrity.

"Two evidences are satisfactory to me:—

"1. A consciousness of approving God's plan of government in the gospel.

"2. A consciousness, that, in trouble, I run to God as a child."

These evidences, Mr. Cecil illustrated even in his diseased moments before his death. On that afflicting dispensation I shall make no remarks of my own, as I think nothing can be added to what my friend, his successor, has so well said in the second of his funeral sermons, and which is here subjoined.

"During the whole period of his last illness, a space of nearly three years, the state of his mind fluctuated with his malady. Every one, who has had opportunities of observing the operation of palsy, knows, that, without destroying, or, properly speaking, perverting the reasoning powers, it agitates and enervates them. Every object is presented through a discoloured medium. False premises are assumed; and the mind is sometimes more than usually expert in drawing inferences accordingly. In a word, the whole system is deranged and shattered. An excessive care, and irritation, and despondency are produced, under the impression of which the sufferer acts every moment, without being at all aware of the cause. His morbid anxiety is, besides, fixed on some inconsiderable or ideal matter, which he magnifies and distorts; while he remains incapable of attending to concerns of superior moment, and any attempts to rectify his misapprehensions, quicken the irritation, and increase the effects of the disorder.

"Under this peculiar visitation, it pleased God that our late venerable father should labour. The energy, and decision, and grandeur of his natural powers, therefore, gradually gave way, and a morbid feebleness succeeded. Yet even in this afflicting state, with his body on one side almost lifeless, his organs of speech impaired, and his judgment weakened, the spiritual dispositions of his heart displayed themselves in a remarkable manner. He appeared great in the ruins of nature; and his eminently religious character manifested itself, to the honour of divine grace, in a manner which surprised all who were acquainted with the

ordinary effects of paralytic complaints. The actings of hope were, of course, impeded; but the habit of grace which had been forming in his mind for thirty or forty years, shone through the cloud. At such a period there was no room for fresh acquisitions. The real character of the man could only appear, when disease allowed it to appear at all, according to the grand leading habits of his life. If his habits had been ambitious, or sensual, or covetous, or worldly, these tendencies, if any, would have displayed themselves; but as his soul had been long established in grace, and spiritual religion had been incorporated with all his trains of sentiment and affection, and had become like a second nature, the holy dispositions of his heart acted with remarkable constancy under all the variations of his illness; so that one of his oldest friends observed to me, that if he had to choose the portion of his life, since he first knew him, in which the evidences of a state of salvation were most decisive, he should, without a moment's hesitation, select the period of his last distressing malady.

"Throughout his illness, his whole mind, instead of being fixed on some mean and insignificant concern, was riveted on spiritual objects. Every other topic was so uninteresting to him, and even burdensome, that he could with reluctance allow it to be introduced. The value of his soul, the emptiness of the world, the nearness and solemnity of death, were ever on his lips. He spent his whole time in reading the Scripture, and one or two old divines, particularly Archbishop Leighton. All he said and did was as a man on the brink of an eternal state.

"His humility, also, evidently ripened as he approached his end. He was willing to receive advice from every quarter. He listened with anxiety to any hint that was offered him. His view of his own misery and helplessness as a sinner, and of the necessity of being entirely indebted to divine grace, and being saved as the greatest monument of its efficacy, was continually on the increase.

"His simplicity and fervor in speaking of the Saviour, were also very remarkable. As he drew nearer to death, his one topic was—Jesus Christ. All his anxiety and care were centered in this grand point. His apprehensions of the work and glory of Christ, of the extent and suitableness of his salvation, and of the unspeakable importance of being spiritually united to him, were more distinct and simple, if possible, than at any period of his life. He spake of him to his family, with the feeling, and interest, and seriousness of the aged and dying believer. His faith, also, never failed. I have heard him with faltering and feeble lips, speak of the great foundations of Christianity with the fullest confidence. He said, he never saw so clearly the truth of the doctrines which he had been preaching, as since his illness. His view of the certainty and excellency of God's promises in Christ was unshaken. The interest, likewise, which he took in the success of the Gospel, was prominent, when his disease at all remitted. His own people lay near his heart; and, when a providence had occurred which he hoped would promote their benefit, he expressed himself with old Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace?'

"The principal effect of his distemper was in throwing a cloud over his comfort; yet, in producing this, the spiritual tendency of his mind appeared. His diseased depression operated indeed, but it was in leading him to set a high standard of holiness, to bring together elevated marks of regeneration, and to require decisive evidences of a spirit of faith and adoption. The acuteness of his judgment then argued so strongly from these false premises, that he necessarily excluded himself almost entirely from the consolation of hope. If I may be allowed a theological term, the objective acts of faith—those that related to the grand objects proposed in the Scriptures on the testimony of God, such as the work of redemption, the person of Christ, and the virtue of his blood, remained the same; nay, were ripened and strengthened as his dissolution approached; but the subjective acts of faith, those which respected his own interest in these blessings, and which gave life to the exercises of hope, rose and sunk with his disease. He was precisely like a man oppressed by a heavy weight: as the load was lightened, he began to move and exert himself in his natural manner; when the burden was increased, he sunk down again under the oppression.

"About a year before his death,* when his powers of mind had for a long time been debilitated, but still retained some remnants of their former vigour, his religious feelings were at times truly desirable. His intellectual powers were indeed too far weakened for joy; but there was a

* Mr. Cecil died in 1810, aged 62 years.

resignation, a tranquillity, a ripeness of grace, a calm and holy repose on the bosom of the Saviour, that quite alarmed, if I may so speak, his anxious family, under the impression that there appeared nothing left for grace to do, and that he would soon be removed from them, as a shock of corn cometh in its season. Even when his disease had made still further progress, as often as the slightest alleviation was afforded him, his judgment became more distinct, his morbid depression lessened, and he was moderately composed. It was only a few weeks before his dissolution, that such an interval was vouchsafed to him. He then spake with great feeling from the Scriptures, in family worship, for about half an hour; and dwelt on the love, and grace, and power of Christ with particular composure of mind. I had the happiness of visiting him at this season. He was so much relieved from his disease, as to enter with me on general topics relating to religion, and to give me some excellent directions as to my conduct as a minister. In reply to various questions which I put to him, he spoke to me to the following purport: 'I know myself to be a wretched, worthless sinner,' (the seriousness and feeling with which he spoke I shall never forget,) 'having nothing in myself but poverty and sin. I know Jesus Christ to be a glorious and almighty Saviour. I see the full efficacy of his atonement and grace; and I cast myself entirely on him, and wait at his footstool. I am aware that my diseased and broken mind makes me incapable of receiving consolation; but I submit myself wholly to the merciful and wise dispensations of God.'

"One or two other interesting testimonies of the spiritual and devoted state of his heart may be here mentioned. A short time before his decease, he requested one of his family to write down for him in a book the following sentence: '"None but Christ, none but Christ," said Lambert, dying at a stake: the same, in dying circumstances, with his whole heart, saith Richard Cecil.' The name was signed by himself, with his left hand, in a manner hardly legible through infirmity."

Such was Mr. Cecil. I sincerely regret that some masterly observer did not both enjoy and improve opportunities of delineating a more perfect picture of his great mind. I have, however, faithfully detailed the impressions which his character made on me, during a long course of affectionate admiration of him: nor have I shrunk from intermingling such remarks as every faithful observer must find occasion to make while he is watching the unfoldings of the best and greatest of men.

Christian parents, and particularly Christian mothers, may gather from the history and character of our departed friend every possible encouragement to the unwearied care of their children. While Austin, Bishop Hall, Richard Hooker, John Newton, Richard Cecil, and many other great and eminent servants of Christ, have left on record their grateful acknowledgments to their pious mothers, as the instruments, under the grace and blessing of God, of winning them to himself, let no woman of faith and prayer despair respecting even her most untoward child.

Mr. Cecil's mere admirers should feel what a weight of responsibility his ministry and his cha-

racter have laid them under. They gave him the ear, but he laboured for the heart. They were pleased with the man, but he prayed that they might become displeased with themselves. They would aid him in his schemes, but he was anxious that they should serve his Master. How soon must they meet him at that judgment-seat before which all must appear, to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil!

His sincere friends are called to imitate his example—to follow him as he followed Christ—to live above this vain world—to sacrifice everything to the honour of Christ and the interests of eternity—to bear up under pain and weariness and anxiety, leaning on Almighty strength, till they join him in that world where weakness shall be felt no more!

JOSIAH PRATT.

REMARKS MADE

BY

MR. CECIL,

CHIEFLY IN CONVERSATION WITH THE EDITOR,

OR

IN DISCUSSIONS WHEN HE WAS PRESENT.

"Multa ab eo prudenter disputata, multa etiam breviter et commodè dicta memoriæ mandabam, fierique studebam ejus prudentiâ doctior."—Cic. de Amicit. i.

REMAINS

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL, M. A.

ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONFLICT.

THE direct cause of a Christian's spiritual life, is union with Christ. All attention to the mere circumstantials of religion, has a tendency to draw the soul away from this union. Few men, except ministers, are called, by the nature of their station, to enter much into these circumstantials: such, for instance, as the evidences of the truth of religion. Ministers feel this deadening effect of any considerable or continued attention to externals: much more must private Christians. The head may be strengthened, till the heart is starved. Some private Christians, however, may be called on, by the nature of those circles in which they move, to be qualified to meet and refute the objections which may be urged against religion. Such men, as well as ministers, while they are furnishing themselves for this purpose, must acquiesce in the

work which God appoints for them, with prayer and watchfulness. If they cannot always live and abide close to the ark, and the pot of manna, and the cherubim, and the mercy-seat; yet they are drawing the water and gathering the wood necessary for the service of the camp. But let their hearts still turn toward the place where the glory resideth.

The Christian's fellowship with God is rather a habit, than a rapture. He is a pilgrim, who has the habit of looking forward to the light before him: he has the habit of not looking back; he has the habit of walking steadily in the way, whatever be the weather, and whatever the road. These are his habits: and the Lord of the way is his guide, protector, friend, and felicity.

As the Christian's exigencies arise, he has a spiritual habit of turning to God, and saying, with the church, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon. I have tried to find rest elsewhere. I have fled to shelters which held out great promise of repose; but I have now long since learned to turn unto thee: Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon."

The Christian will look back, throughout

eternity, with interest and delight, on the steps and means of his conversion. "My father told me this! My mother told me that! Such an event was sanctified to me! In such a place God visited my soul!" These recollections will never grow dull and wearisome.

A VOLUME might be written on the various methods which God has taken, in providence, to lead men first to think of him.

THE history of a man's own life is, to himself, the most interesting history in the world, next to that of the Scriptures. Every man is an original and solitary character. None can either understand or feel the book of his own life like himself. The lives of other men are to him dry and vapid, when set beside his own. He enters very little into the spirit of the Old Testament, who does not see God calling on him to turn over the pages of this history when he says to the Jew, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years." He sees God teaching the Jew to look at the records of his deliverance from the Red Sea, of the manna showered down on him from heaven, and of the Amalekites put to flight before him. There are such grand events in the life and experience of every Christian, it may be well for him to review them often. I have,

in some cases, vowed before God, to appropriate yearly remembrances of some of the signal turns of my life. Having made the vow, I hold it as obligatory: but I would advise others to greater circumspection; as they may bring a galling yoke on themselves, which God designed not to put on them.

True grace is a growing principle. The Christian grows in discernment: a child may play with a serpent; but the man gets as far from it as he can: a child may taste poison; but the man will not suffer a speck of poison near him. He grows in humility: the blade shoots up boldly, and the young ear keeps erect with confidence; but the full corn in the ear inclines itself toward the earth, not because it is feebler, but because it is matured. He grows in strength: the new wine ferments and frets; but the old wine acquires a body and a firmness.

Tenderness of conscience is always to be distinguished from scrupulousness. The conscience cannot be kept too sensible and tender: but scrupulousness arises from bodily or mental infirmity, and discovers itself in a multitude of ridiculous, and superstitious, and painful feelings.

The head is dull in discerning the value of God's expedients; and the heart cold, slug-

gish, and reluctant, in submitting to them: but the head is lively, in the invention of its own expedients; and the heart eager and sanguine, in pursuit of them. No wonder, then, that God subjects both the head and the heart to a course of continual correction.

EVERY man will have his own criterion in forming his judgment of others. I depend very much on the effect of affliction. I consider how a man comes out of the furnace: gold will lie for a month in the furnace without losing a grain. And while under trial, a child has a habit of turning to his father: he is not like a penitent, who has been whipped into this state: it is natural to him. It is dark, and the child has no where to run, but to his father.

DEFILEMENT is inseparable from the world. A man can no where rest his foot on it without sinking. A strong principle of assimilation combines the world and the heart together. There are, especially, certain occasions, when the current hurries a man away, and he has lost the religious government of himself. When the pilot finds, on making the port of Messina, that the ship will not obey the helm, he knows that she is got within the influence of that attraction, which will bury her in the whirlpool. We are to avoid the danger, rather than to oppose it. This is a great doc-

trine of Scripture. An active force against the world is not so much inculcated, as a retreating, declining spirit. "Keep thyself unspotted from the world."

THERE are seasons when a Christian's distinguishing character is hidden from man. A Christian merchant on 'Change is not called to show any difference in his mere exterior carriage from another merchant. He gives a reasonable answer if he is asked a question. He does not fanatically intrude religion into every sentence he utters. He does not suppose his religion to be inconsistent with the common interchange of civilities. He is affable and courteous. He can ask the news of the day, and take up any public topic of conversation. But is he, therefore, not different from other men? He is like another merchant in the mere exterior circumstance, which is least in God's regard; but, in his taste, his views, his science, his hopes, his happiness, he is as different from those around him as light is from darkness. He waits for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who never passes perhaps through the thoughts of those he talks with, but to be neglected and despised.

THE Christian is called to be like Abraham, in conduct; like Paul, in labour; and like John, in spirit. Though, as a man of faith,

he goes forth not knowing whither, and his principle is hidden from the world, yet he will oblige the world to acknowledge: "His views, it is true, we do not understand. His principles and general conduct are a mystery to us. But a more upright, noble, generous, disinterested, peaceable, and benevolent man, we know not where to find." The world may even count him a madman; and false brethren may vilify his character, and calumniate his motives: yet he will bear down evil, by repaying good; and will silence his enemies, by the abundance of his labours. He may be shut out from the world, cast into prison, banished into obscurity, no eye to observe him, no hand to help him; but it is enough for him, if his Saviour will speak to him and smile on him.

CHRISTIANS are too little aware what their religion requires from them, with regard to their wishes. When we wish things to be otherwise than they are, we lose sight of the great practical parts of the life of godliness. We wish, and wish—when, if we have done all that lies on us, we should fall quietly into the hands of God. Such wishing cuts the very sinews of our privileges and consolations. You are leaving me for a time; and you say you wish you could leave me better, or leave me with some assistance; but, if it is right for

you to go, it is right for me to meet what lies on me, without a wish that I had less to meet, or were better able to meet it.

I COULD write down twenty cases, wherein I wished God had done otherwise than he did; but which I now see, had I had my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. The life of a Christian is a life of paradoxes. He must lay hold on God, he must follow hard after him, he must determine not to let him go. And yet he must learn to let God alone. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces—to sit where he places us; to be what he would have us to be, and this as long as he pleases. We are like a player at bowls; if he has given his bowl too little bias, he cries, "Flee;" if he has given it too much, he cries, "Rub;" you see him lifting his leg, and bending his body in conformity to the motion he would impart to the bowl. Thus I have felt with regard to my dispensations; I would urge them or restrain them: I would assimilate them to the habit of my mind. But I have smarted for this under severe visitations. It may seem a harsh, but it is a wise and gracious dispensation toward a man, when, the instant he stretches out his hand to order his affairs, God forces him to withdraw it. Concerning what is morally good or evil, we are suffi-

ciently informed for our direction; but concerning what is naturally good or evil, we are ignorance itself. Restlessness and self-will are opposed to our duty in these cases.

SCHOOLING the heart is the grand means of personal religion. To bring motives under faithful examination, is a high state of religious character: with regard to the depravity of the heart we live daily in the disbelief of our own creed. We indulge thoughts and feelings, which are founded upon the presumption that all around us are imperfect and corrupted, but that we are exempted. The self-will and ambition and passion of public characters in the religious world, all arise from this sort of practical infidelity. And though its effects are so manifest in these men, because they are leaders of parties, and are set upon a pinnacle so that all who are without the influence of their vortex can see them; yet every man's own breast has an infallible, dogmatizing, excommunicating, and anathematizing spirit working within.

ACTING from the occasion, without recollection and inquiry, is the death of personal religion. It will not suffice merely to retire to the study or the closet. The mind is sometimes, in private, most ardently pursuing its particular object; and, as it then acts from the occasion, nothing is further from it than

recollectedness. I have for weeks together, in pursuit of some scheme, acted so entirely from the occasion, that, when I have at length called myself to account, I have seemed like one awaked from a dream. "Am I the man who could think and speak so and so? Am I the man who could feel such a disposition, or discover such conduct?" The fascination and enchantment of the occasion is vanished; and I stand like David, in similar circumstances, before Nathan. Such cases in experience are, in truth, a moral intoxication; and the man is only then sober, when he begins to school his heart.

THE servant of God has not only natural sensibilities, by which he feels, in common with other men, the sorrows of life; but he has moral sensibilities, which are peculiar to his character. When David was driven from his kingdom, he not only felt depressed as an exile and wanderer; but he would recollect his own sin as punished in the affliction. Eli had not only to suffer the pangs of a father in the loss of his sons; but he would recall in the bitterness of his spirit, his own mismanagement, in bringing up these sons. Paul had not only to endure the thorn in the flesh; but he would feel that he carried about him propensities to self-exaltation, which rendered that thorn necessary and salutary.

Dangerous predicaments are the brinks of temptations. A man often gives evidence to others that he is giddy, though he is not aware of it, perhaps, himself. Whoever has been in danger himself will guess very shrewdly concerning the dangerous state of such a man.

A haughty spirit is a symptom of extreme danger—"A haughty spirit goeth before a fall."

Presumptuous carelessness indicates danger.

"Who fears?" This is to be feared, that you feel no cause of fear. Such was Peter's state: "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I."

Venturing on the borders of danger is much akin to this. A man goes on pretty well till he ventures within the atmosphere of danger: but the atmosphere of danger infatuates him. The ship is got within the influence of the vortex, and will not obey the helm. David was sitting in this atmosphere on the house-top, and was ensnared and fell.

An accession of wealth is a dangerous predicament for a man. At first he is stunned, if the accession be sudden: he is very humble and very grateful. Then he begins to speak a little louder, people think him more sensible, and soon he thinks himself so.

A man is in imminent danger when, in sus-

pected circumstances, he is disposed to equivocate, as Abraham did with Pharaoh, and Isaac with Abimelech.

Stupidity of conscience under chastisement, an advancement to power, when a man begins to relish such power, popularity, self-indulgence, a disposition to gad about, like Dinah —all these are symptoms of spiritual danger.

A CHANGE of circumstances in our condition of life is a critical period. No man who has not passed through such a change, can form any adequate notion of its effects upon the mind. When money comes into the pocket of a poor man in small sums, it goes out as it came in, and more follows it in the same way; and with a certain freedom and indifference, it is applied to its proper uses: but when he begins to receive round sums, that may yield him an interest, and when this interest comes to be added to his principal, and the sweets of augmentation to creep over him, it is quite a new world to him. In a rise of circumstances, too, the man becomes, in his own opinion, a wiser man, a greater man; and pride of station crosses him in his way. Nor is the contrary change less dangerous. Poverty has its trials. That is a fine trait in the Pilgrim's Progress, that Christian stumbled in going down the hill into the Valley of Humiliation.

A SOUND head, a simple heart, and a spirit dependent on Christ, will suffice to conduct us in every variety of circumstances.

I CANNOT look through my past life without trembling. A variation in my circumstances has been attended with dangers and difficulties, little of which I saw at the time compared with what reflection has since shown me, but which in the review of them make me shudder, and ought to fill me with gratitude. He, who views this subject aright, will put up particular prayers against sudden attacks.

GOD will have the Christian thoroughly humbled and dependent. Strong minds think perhaps sometimes, that they can effect great things in experience by keeping themselves girt up, by the recurrence of habit, by vigorous exertion. This is their unquestionable duty. But God often strips them, lest they should grow confident. He lays them bare. He makes them feel poor, dark, impotent. He seems to say, "Strive with all your vigour, but yet I am he that worketh all in all."

THERE is no calling or profession, however ensnaring in many respects to a Christian mind, provided it be not in itself simply unlawful, wherein God has not frequently raised up faithful witnesses, who have stood forth for examples to others, in like situations, of

the practicability of uniting great eminence in the Christian life, with the discharge of the duties of their profession, however difficult.

FEAR has the most steady effect on the constitutional temperament of some Christians, to keep them in their course. A strong sense of duty fixes on the minds of others, and is the prevailing principle of conduct, without any direct reference to consequences. On minds of a stubborn, refractory, and self-willed temper, fear and duty have in general little effect: they brave fear, and a mere sense of duty is a cold and lifeless principle; but gratitude, under a strong and subduing sense of mercies, melts them into obedience.

THERE is a large class, who would confound nature and grace. These are chiefly women. They sit at home, nursing themselves over a fire, and then trace up the natural effects of solitude and want of air and exercise, into spiritual desertion. There is more pride in this than they are aware of. They are unwilling to allow so simple and natural a cause of their feelings, and wish to find something in the thing more sublime.

THERE are so many things to lower a man's topsails, he is such a dependent creature, he is to pay such court to his stomach, his food, his sleep, his exercise, that, in truth, a hero

is an idle word. Man seems formed to be a hero in suffering, not a hero in action. Men err in nothing more than in the estimate which they make of human labour. The hero of the world is the man that makes a bustle, the man that makes the road smoke under his chaise-and-four, the man that raises a dust about him, the man that manages or devastates empires! But what is the real labour of this man, compared with that of a silent sufferer? He lives on his projects. He encounters, perhaps, rough roads, incommodious inns, bad food, storms and perils, weary days and sleepless nights: but what are these? His project, his point, the thing that has laid hold on his heart, glory, a name, consequence, pleasure, wealth, these render the man callous to the pains and efforts of the body. I have been in both states, and therefore understand them; and I know that men form this false estimate. Besides, there is something in bustle, and stir, and activity, that supports itself. At one period, I preached and read five times on a Sunday, and rode sixteen miles. But what did it cost me? Nothing! Yet most men would have looked on while I was rattling from village to village, with all the dogs barking at my heels, and would have called me a hero: whereas, if they were to look at me now, they would call me an idle, lounging fellow. "He makes a

sermon on the Saturday; he gets into his study; he walks from end to end; he scribbles on a scrap of paper; he throws it away and scribbles on another; he takes snuff; he sits down; scribbles again; walks about." The man cannot see that here is an exhaustion of the spirit, which, at night, will leave me worn to the extremity of endurance. He cannot see the numberless efforts of mind, which are crossed and stifled, and recoil on the spirits; like the fruitless efforts of a traveller to get firm footing among the ashes on the steep sides of Mount Etna.*

ELIJAH appears to have been a man of what we call a great spirit; yet we never find him rising against the humiliating methods which God was sometimes pleased to take with him; whether he is to depend for his daily food on the ravens, or is to be nourished by the slender pittance of a perishing widow. Pride would choose for us such means of provision, as have some appearance of our own agency in them; and stout-heartedness would lead us to refuse things, if we cannot have them in our own way.

THE blessed man is he, who is under education in God's school; where he endures chastisement, and by chastisement is instructed. The foolish creature is bewitched, sometimes,

* See the Adventurer, No. cxxvii. J. P.

with the enchantments and sorceries of life. He begins to lose the lively sense of that something, which is superior to the glory of the world. His grovelling soul begins to say, "Is not this fine? Is not that charming? Is not that noble house worth a wish? Is not that equipage worth a sigh?" He must go to the word of God to know what a thing is worth. He must be taught there to call things by their proper names. If he have lost this habit, when his heart puts the questions he will answer them like a fool, as I have done a thousand times. He will forget that God puts his children into possession of these things, as mere stewards; and that the possession of them increases their responsibility. He will sit down and plan, and scheme to obtain possession of things, which he forgets are to be burnt and destroyed. But God dashes the fond scheme in pieces. He disappoints the project. And, with the chastisement he sends instruction; for he knows that the silly creature if left to himself, would begin, like the spider whose web has been swept away, to spin again. And then the man sees that Job is blessed—not, when God gives him sons and daughters, and flocks and herds, and power, and honour—but when God takes all these away; not when the schemes of his carnal heart are indulged—but when they are crossed and disappointed. A stubborn

and rebellious mind in a Christian must be kept low by dark and trying dispensations. The language of God, in his providence, to such an one, is generally of this kind: "I will not wholly hide myself. I will be seen by thee. But thou shalt never meet me, except in a dark night and in a storm." Ministers of such a natural spirit are often fitted for eminent usefulness by these means.

THE Christian, in his sufferings, is often tempted to think himself forgotten. But his afflictions are the clearest proofs that he is an object both of Satan's enmity, and of God's fatherly discipline. Satan would not have man suffer a single trouble all his life long, if he might have his way. He would give him the thing his heart is set upon. He would work in with his ambition. He would pamper his lusts and his pride. But God has better things in reserve for his children; and they must be brought to desire them and seek them; and this will be through the wreck and sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear. The Christian prays for full manifestations of Christ's power and glory and love to him; but he is often not aware that this is, in truth, praying to be brought into the furnace; for in the furnace only it is, that Christ can walk with his friends, and display, in their preservation and deliverance, his own almighty

power. Yet, when brought thither, it is one of the worst parts of the trial, that the Christian often thinks himself, for a time at least, abandoned. Job thought so. But while he looked on himself as an outcast, the infinite Spirit and the wicked spirit were holding a dialogue on his case! He was more an object of notice and interest, than the largest armies that were ever assembled, and the mightiest revolutions that ever shook the world, considered merely in their temporal interests and consequences. Let the Christian be deeply concerned, in all his trials, to honour his Master before such observers!

Affliction has a tendency, especially if long continued, to generate a kind of despondency and ill-temper; and spiritual incapacity is closely connected with pain and sickness. The spirit of prayer does not necessarily come with affliction. If this be not poured out upon the man, he will, like a wounded beast, skulk to his den and growl there.

God has marked implicitness and simplicity of faith with peculiar approbation. He has done this throughout the Scripture; and he is doing it daily in the Christian life. An unsuspecting, unquestioning, unhesitating spirit, he delights to honour. He does not delight in a credulous, weak, and unstable mind. He gives us full evidence, when he calls and

leads; but he expects to find in us—what he himself bestows—an open ear and disposed heart. Though he gives us not the evidence of sense; yet he gives such evidence as will be heard by an open ear, and followed by a disposed heart:—"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." We are witnesses what an open ear and a disposed heart will do in men of the world. If wealth is in pursuit, if a place presents itself before them, if their persons and families and affairs are the object, a whisper, a hint, a probability, a mere chance, is a sufficient ground of action. It is this very state of mind with regard to religion, which God delights in and honours. He seems to put forth his hand, and to say: "Put thy hand into mine. Follow all my leadings. Keep thyself attentive to every turn."

A SOUND heart is an excellent casuist. Men stand doubting what they shall do, while an evil heart is at the bottom. If, with Paul, they simply did "one thing," the way would be plain. A miser, or an ambitious man, knows his points; and he has such a simplicity in the pursuit of them, that you seldom find him at a loss about the steps which he should take to attain them. He has acquired a sort of instinctive habit in his pursuit. Simplicity and rectitude would have

prevented a thousand schisms in the Church; which have generally risen from men having something else in plan and prospect, and not the one thing.

"WHAT I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," is the unwearied language of God in his providence. He will have credit every step. He will not assign reasons, because he will exercise faith.

PRIDE urges men to inquire into the philosophy of divine truth. They are not contented, for example, with the account which the Bible gives of the origin of evil, and its actual influence on mankind; but they would supply what God has left untold. They would explain the fitness and propriety of things. A mathematician may summon his scholars round his chair, and from self-evident principles deduce and demonstrate his conclusions. He has axioms; but concerning evil we have none. A Christian may say on this subject, as Sir Christopher Wren did concerning the roof of King's College Chapel—"Show me how to fix the first stone, and I will finish the building." "Explain the origin of evil, and I will explain every other difficulty respecting evil." We are placed in a dispensation and constitution of things, under a righteous Governor. If we will not rest satisfied with this, something is wrong in our state of mind. It is a

solid satisfaction to every man who has been seduced into foolish inquiries, that it is utterly impossible to advance one inch by them. He must come back to rest in God's appointment; he must come back to sit patiently, meekly, and with docility, at the feet of a teacher.

DUTIES are ours; events are God's. This removes an infinite burden from the shoulders of a miserable, tempted, dying creature. On this consideration only, can he securely lay down his head and close his eyes.

THE Christian often thinks, and schemes, and talks like a practical Atheist. His eye is so conversant with second causes, that the great Mover is little regarded. And yet those sentiments and that conduct of others, by which his affairs are influenced, are not formed by chance and at random. They are attracted toward the system of his affairs, or repelled from them, by the highest power. We talk of attraction in the universe; but there is no such thing, as we are accustomed to consider it. The natural and moral worlds are held together in their respective operations, by an incessant administration. It is the mighty grasp of a controlling hand, which keeps everything in its station. Were this control suspended, there is nothing adequate to the preservation of harmony and affection

between my mind and that of my dearest friend, for a single hour.

Lord Chesterfield tells his son, that when he entered into the world and heard the conjectures and notions about public affairs, he was surprised at their folly; because he was in the secret, and knew what was passing in the cabinet. We negotiate; we make treaties; we make war; we cry for peace. We have public hopes and fears. We distrust one minister, and we repose on another. We recall one general or admiral, because he has lost the national confidence, and we send out another with a full tide of hopes and expectations. We find something in men and measures, as the sufficient cause of all sufferings or anticipations. But a religious man enters the cabinet. He sees, in all public fears and difficulties, the pressure of God's hand. So long as this pressure continues, he knows that we may move heaven and earth in vain; everything is bound up in icy fetters. But, when God removes his hand, the waters flow, measures avail, and hopes are accomplished.

We are too apt to forget our actual dependence on providence, for the circumstances of every instant. The most trivial events may determine our state in the world. Turning up one street instead of another, may bring us into company with a person whom we

should not otherwise have met; and this may lead to a train of other events, which may determine the happiness or misery of our lives.

LIGHT may break in upon a man after he has taken a particular step; but he will not condemn himself for the step taken in a less degree of light: he may hereafter see still better than he now does, and have reason to alter his opinion again. It is enough to satisfy us of our duty, if we are conscious at the time we take a step, we have an adequate motive. If we are conscious of a wrong motive, or of a rash proceeding, for such steps we must expect to suffer.

Trouble or difficulty befalling us after any particular step, is not, of itself, an argument that the step was wrong. A storm overtook the disciples in the ship; but this was no proof that they had done wrong to go on board. Esau met Jacob, and occasioned him great fear and anxiety, when he left Laban; but this did not prove him to have done wrong in the step which he had taken. Difficulties are no ground of presumption against us, when we did not run into them in following our own will; yet the Israelites were with difficulty convinced that they were in the path of duty, when they found themselves shut in by the Red Sea. Christians, and especially

ministers, must expect troubles: it is in this way that God leads them: he conducts them "*per ardua ad astra.*" They would be in imminent danger if the multitude at all times cried, Hosanna!

We must remember that we are short-sighted creatures. We are like an unskilful chess-player, who takes the next piece, while a skilful one looks further. He, who "sees the end from the beginning," will often appoint us a most inexplicable way to walk in. Joseph was put into the pit and the dungeon: but this was the way which led to the throne.

We often want to know too much and too soon. We want the light of to-morrow, but it will not come till to-morrow. And then a slight turn, perhaps, will throw such light on our path, that we shall be astonished we saw not our way before. "I can wait," says Lavater. This is a high attainment. We must labour, therefore, to be quiet in that path, from which we cannot recede without danger and evil.

THERE is not a nobler sight in the world than an aged and experienced Christian, who, having been sifted in the sieve of temptation, stands forth as a confirmer of the assaulted—testifying from his own trials, the reality of religion; and meeting, by his warnings and directions and consolations, the cases of all who may be tempted to doubt it.

THE Christian expects his reward, not as due to merit; but as connected, in a constitution of grace, with those acts which grace enables him to perform. The pilgrim, who has been led to the gate of heaven, will not knock there as worthy of being admitted; but the gate shall open to him, because he is brought thither. He, who sows, even with tears, the precious seed of faith, hope, and love, "shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him;" because it is in the very nature of that seed to yield, under the kindly influence secured to it, a joyful harvest.

ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

ON A MINISTER'S QUALIFYING HIMSELF FOR HIS OFFICE.

WHEN a young minister sets out, he should sit down and ask himself how he may best qualify himself for his office. How does a physician qualify himself? It is not enough that he offers to feel the pulse. He must read, and enquire, and observe, and make experiments, and correct himself again and again. He must lay in a stock of medical knowledge before he begins to feel the pulse.

The minister is a physician of a far higher order. He has a vast field before him. He has to study an infinite variety of constitutions. He is to furnish himself with the knowledge of the whole system of remedies. He is to be a man of skill and expedient. If one thing fail, he must know how to apply another. Many intricate and perplexed cases will come before him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared for such. His patients will put many questions to him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared to answer them. He is a merchant embarking in extensive concerns. A little ready money in the pocket will not answer the demands that will be made upon him. Some of us seem to think it will; but they are grossly deceived. There must be a well furnished account at the banker's.

But it is not all gold that glitters. A young minister must learn to separate and select his materials. A man who talks to himself will find out what suits the heart of man. Some things respond: they ring again. Nothing of this nature is lost on mankind: it is worth its weight in gold, for the service of a minister. He must remark, too, what it is that puzzles and distracts the mind: all this is to be avoided. It may wear the garb of deep research, and great acumen, and exten-

sive learning; but it is nothing to the mass of mankind.

One of the most important considerations in making a sermon, is to disembarrass it as much as possible. The sermons of the last century were like their large, unwieldy chairs. Men have now a far more true idea of a chair. They consider it as a piece of furniture to sit upon, and they cut away from it everything that embarrasses and encumbers it. It requires as much reflection and wisdom to know what is not to be put into a sermon, as what is.

A young minister should likewise look round him, that he may see what has succeeded and what has not. Truth is to be his companion, but he is to clothe her so as to gain her access. Truth must never bow to fashion or prejudice; but her garb may be varied. No man was ever eminently successful in his ministry, who did not make truth his friend. Such a man might not see her, indeed, in all her beauty and proportions; but, certainly, he saw and loved her. A young minister should remember that she does not wear the dress of a party. Wherever she is, she is one and the same, however variously men may array her. He, who is ignorant of her prominent and distinguishing features, is like a musician who plays half score: it grates on every well-formed ear; as

fatal error finds no corresponding vibration in the renewed heart. Truth forms an immediate acquaintance with such a heart, by a certain fitness and suitableness to its state and feelings. She is something different from the picture which a churchman draws of her. A dissenter misses her perfect figure. A Frenchman distorts her features in one way: and an Englishman in another. Every one makes his own cast and colour too essential to her.

Knowledge, then, and truth, are to be the constant aim of a young minister. But where shall he find them? Let him learn from a fool, if a fool can teach him anything. Let him be everywhere, and always a learner. He should imitate Gainsborough. Gainsborough transfused nature into his landscapes, beyond almost any of his contemporaries: because Gainsborough was everywhere the painter. Every remarkable feature or position of a tree—every fine stroke of nature—was copied into his pocket-book on the spot; and, in his next picture, appeared with a life and vivacity and nature, which no strength of memory or imagination could have supplied.

There is a certain wise way, too, in which he should accustom himself to look down on the pursuits of all other men. No man of eminence in his profession is destitute of such

a partial feeling for his profession; though his judgment may remonstrate with him thereon, as an unfounded partiality. The minister, however, is required so to view all other pursuits. He alone is the man whose aim is eternity. He alone is the man, whose office and profession, in all their parts, are raised into dignity and importance by their direct reference to eternity. For eternity he schemes, and plans, and labours.

He should become a philosopher also. He should make experiments on himself and others, in order to find out what will produce effect. He is a fisherman; and the fisherman must fit himself to his employment. If some fish will bite only by day, he must fish by day; if others will bite only by moonlight, he must fish for them by moonlight. He has an engine to work, and it must be his most assiduous endeavour to work his engine to the full extent of its powers: and, to find out its powers, is the first step toward success and effect. Many men play admirably on the organ, if you would allow to them that there is no difference between an organ and a harpsichord, but they have utterly mistaken its powers. Combination is the unrivalled excellence of the organ; and therefore he only can display its powers, who studies the chords and stops in all their infinite variety of reso-

lution and composition, rather than the rapid motion of his fingers only.

But all the minister's efforts will be vanity, or worse than vanity, if he have not unction. Unction must come down from heaven, and spread a savour and relish and feeling over his ministry. And, among all the other means of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to the word of God and prayer.

ON THE ASSISTANCE WHICH A MINISTER HAS REASON TO EXPECT IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS PUBLIC DUTY.

MEN have carried their views on this subject to extremes. Enthusiasts have said that learning, and that studying and writing sermons, have injured the church. The accurate men have said, "Go and hear one of these enthusiasts hold forth!" But both classes may be rendered useful. Let each correct its evils, yet do its work in its own way.

Some men set up exorbitant notions about accuracy. But exquisite accuracy is totally lost on mankind. The greater part of those who hear, cannot be brought to see the points of the accurate man. The Scriptures are not written in this manner. I should advise

a young minister to break through all such cobwebs, as these unphilosophical men would spin round him. An humble and modest man is silenced, if he sees one of these critics before him. He should say, "I am God's servant. To my own Master I stand or fall. I will labour according to the utmost ability which God giveth, and leave all consequences to him."

We are especially taught in the New Testament, to glorify the Spirit of God; and, in his gracious operations in our ministry, we are nearer the apostolic times than we often think ourselves. But this assistance is to be expected by us, as labourers in the vineyard; not as rhapsodists. Idle men may be pointed out, who have abused the doctrine of divine assistance; but what has not been abused? We must expect a special blessing to accompany the truth: not to supersede labour, but to rest on and accompany labour.

A minister is to be "in season, and out of season;" and, therefore, everywhere a minister. He will not employ himself in writing secular histories: he will not busy himself in prosecuting mathematical inquiries. He will labour directly in his high calling: and indirectly, in a vast variety of ways, as he may be enabled: and God may bless that word in private, which may have been long heard in public in vain.

A minister should satisfy himself in saying, "It matters not what men think of my talents. Am I doing what I can?"—for there is great encouragement in that commendation of our Lord's, "She hath done what she could." It would betray a wrong state of mind to say, "If I had discharged my duty in such and such a way, I should have succeeded." This is a carnal spirit. If God bless the simple manner in which you spoke, that will do good; if not, no manner of speaking could have done it.

There is such a thing in the religious world as a cold, carnal wisdom: everything must be nicely weighed in the scales; everything must be exactly measured by the rule. I question if this is not worse, in its consequences, than the enthusiasm which it opposes. Both are evil, and to be shunned. But I scarcely ever knew a preacher or writer of this class who did much good.

We are to go forth, expecting the excellency of God's power to accompany us, since we are but earthen vessels: and if, in the apostolic days, diligence was necessary, how much more requisite is it now!

But to the exercise of this diligence, a sufficiency in all things is promised. What does a minister require? In all these respects the promise is applicable to him. He needs, for instance, courage and patience: he may,

therefore, expect that the Holy Spirit will enable him for the exercise of these graces.

A minister may expect more superintendence, more elevation, than a hearer. It can scarcely be questioned that he ought to pray for this; if so, he has a ground in Scripture thus to pray.

I have been cured of expecting the Holy Spirit's influence without due preparation on our part, by observing how men preach who take up that error. I have heard such men talk nonsense by the hour.

We must combine Luther with Paul—"*Bene orasse est bene studuisse*," must be united with Paul's "Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." One errs who says, "I will preach a reputable sermon:" and another errs who says, "I will leave all to the assistance of the Holy Spirit," while he has neglected a diligent preparation.

ON PREACHING CHRIST.

We preach Christ crucified—1 Cor. i. 23.

CHRIST is God's great ordinance. Nothing ever has been done, or will be done to purpose, but so far as he is held forth with simplicity. All the lines must centre in him. I

feel this in my own experience, and therefore I govern my ministry by it; but then this is to be done according to the analogy of faith —not ignorantly, absurdly, and falsely. I doubt not, indeed, but that excess on this side is less pernicious than excess on the other; because God will bless his own especial ordinance, though partially understood and partially exhibited.

THERE are many weighty reasons for rendering Christ prominent in our ministry:—

1. Christ cheers the prospect. Everything connected with him has light and gladness thrown around it. I look out of my window: —the scene is scowling, dark, frigid, forbidding; I shudder, my heart is chilled. But let the sun break forth from the cloud; I can feel, I can act, I can spring.

2. God descending and dwelling with man is a truth so infinitely grand, that it must absorb all others. "You are his attendants! Well! but the King! There he is!—the King!"

3. Out of Christ God is not intelligible, much less amiable. Such men as Clarke and Abernethy talk sublime nonsense. A sick woman said to me: "Sir! I have no notion of God. I can form no notion of him. You talk to me about him, but I cannot get a single idea that seems to contain any-

thing." "But you know how to conceive of Jesus Christ as a man! God comes down to you in him, full of kindness and condescension." "Ah! sir, that gives me something to lay hold on. There I can rest. I understand God in his Son." But if God is not intelligible out of Christ, much less is he amiable, though I ought to feel him so. He is an object of horror and aversion to me, corrupted as I am! I fear, I tremble, I resist, I hate, I rebel.

4. A preacher may pursue his topic, without being led by it to Christ. A man who is accustomed to investigate topics is in danger. He takes up his topic and pursues it. He takes up another and pursues it. At length Jesus Christ becomes his topic, and then he pursues that. If he cannot so feel and think as to bend all subjects naturally and gracefully to Christ, he must seek his remedy in selecting such as are more evangelical.

5. God puts peculiar honour on the preaching of Christ crucified. A philosopher may philosophize his hearers, but the preaching of Christ must convert them. John the Baptist will make his hearers tremble; but, if "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," let him exhibit that peculiar feature of his superiority—Jesus Christ. Men may preach Christ ignorantly, blunderingly, ab-

surdly; yet God will give it efficacy, because he is determined to magnify his own ordinance.

6. God seems, in the doctrine of the cross, to design the destruction of man's pride. Even the murderer and the adulterer sometimes becomes subject of the grace of the Gospel, because the murderer and adulterer are more easily convinced and humbled; but the man of virtue is seldom reached, because the man of virtue disdains to descend. "Remember me," saved a dying malefactor!—"God, I thank thee," condemned a proud Pharisee!

EVERY minister should therefore enquire, "what is for me the wisest way of preaching Christ to men?" Some seem to think that in the choice of a wise way, there lurks always a trimming disposition. There are men, doubtless, who will sacrifice to self, even Christ Jesus the Lord; but, they of all men, are farthest from the thing. There is a secret in doing it, which none but an honest man can discover. The knave is not half wise enough.

We are not to judge one another in these things. Sufficient it is, to us, to know what we have to do. There are different ways of doing the same thing, and that with success and acceptance. We see this in the apostles

themselves. They not only preached Christ in different ways; but, what is more, they could not do this like one another. They declare this fact themselves; and acknowledge the grace of God in their respective gifts. "Our beloved brother Paul writes," says Peter, "according to the wisdom given unto him." But there are Peters, in our days, who would say: "Paul is too learned. Away with these things, which are 'hard to be understood.' He should be more simple. I dislike all this reasoning." And there are Pauls, who would say, "Peter is rash and unguarded. He should put a curb on his impetuosity." And there are Johns, who would say, "They should both discharge their offices in my soft and winning manner. No good will come of this fire and noise." Nothing of this sort! Each hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that; and each seems only desirous to occupy faithfully till his Master come, leaving his brethren to stand or fall to their own Master.

Too much dependence is often placed on a system of rational contrivance. An ingenious man thinks he can so manage to preach Christ, that his hearers will say: "Here is nothing of methodism! This has nothing to do with that system!" I will venture to say, if this is the sentiment communicated by his

ministry, that he has not delivered his message. The people do not know what he means, or he has kept back part of God's truth. He has fallen on a carnal contrivance, to avoid a cross, and he does no good to souls. The whole message must be delivered; and it is better it should be delivered even coarsely, than not at all. We may lay it down as a principle, that if the Gospel be a medicine, and a specific too, as it is, it must be got down such as it is. Any attempt to sophisticate and adulterate will deprive it of its efficacy; and will often recoil on the man who makes the attempt, to his shame and confusion. The Jesuits tried to render Christianity palatable to the Chinese by adulterating it; but the Jesuits were driven with abhorrence from the empire.

If we have to deal with men of learning, let us show learning so far as to demonstrate that it bears its testimony to the truth. But accommodation in manner must often spring from humility. We must condescend to the capacity of men, and make the truth intelligible to them.

If this be our manner of preaching Christ, we must make up our minds not to regard the little caviller who will judge us by the standard of his favourite author or preacher. We must be cautious, too, since men of God have been and ever will be the butt and scorn of

the world, of thinking that we can escape its snares and its censures. It is a foolish project, to avoid giving offence; but it is our duty to avoid giving unnecessary offence. It is necessary offence, if it is given by the truth: but it is unnecessary, if our own spirit occasion it.

I have often thought that Paul was raised up peculiarly to be an example to others, in labouring to discover the wisest way of exhibiting the Gospel; not only that he was to be a great pattern in other points, but designedly raised up for this very thing. How does he labour to make the truth reasonably plain! How does he strain every nerve and ransack every corner of the heart, to make it reasonably palatable! We need not be instructed in his particular meaning when he says, "I became all things to all men, if by any means I might save some." His history is a comment on the declaration.

The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a wonderful mystery. Some men think they preach Christ gloriously because they name him every two minutes in their sermons. But that is not preaching Christ. To understand, and enter into, and open his various offices and characters—the glories of his person and work—his relation to us, and ours to him, and to God the Father and God the Spirit through him—this is the knowledge of Christ. The

divines of the present day are stunted dwarfs in this knowledge, compared with the great men of the last age. To know Jesus Christ for ourselves, is to make him a consolation, delight, strength, righteousness, companion, and end.

This is the aspect in which religion should be presented to mankind: it is suited, above all other, to produce effect; and effect is our object. We must take human nature as we find human nature. We must take human nature in great cities, as we find human nature in great cities. We may say—"this or that is the aspect which ought to have most effect: we must illuminate the mind: we must enlist the reason: we must attack the conscience." We may do all this, and yet our comparative want of success in begetting and educating the sons of glory, may demonstrate to us that there is some more effective way; and that sound sense and philosophy call on us to adopt that way, because it is the most effective.

Our system of preaching must meet mankind; they must find it possible to live in the bustle of the world, and yet serve God: after being worried and harassed with its concerns, let them hear cheering truths concerning Christ's love and care and pity, which will operate like an enchantment in dispelling the cares of life, and calming the anxious pertur-

bations of conscience. Bring forward privileges and enforce duties, in their proper places and proportions.

Let there be no extremes: yet I am arrived at this conviction:—Men, who lean toward the extreme of evangelical privileges in their ministry, do much more to the conversion of their hearers, than they do who lean toward the extreme of requirement. And my own experience confirms my observation. I feel myself repelled, if anything chills, loads, or urges me. This is my nature, and I see it to be very much the nature of other men. But, let me hear, "Son of man, thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me saith the Lord"—I am melted and subdued.

ON A MINISTER'S FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE WITH HIS HEARERS.

What passes, on these occasions, too often savours of this world. We become one among our hearers. They come to church on Sunday; and we preach: the week comes round again, and its nonsense with it. Now, if a minister were what he should be, the people would feel it. They would not attempt to introduce this silly, diurnal chat! When we countenance this, it looks as though, "On the

Sunday I am ready to do my business; and, in the week, you may do yours." This lowers the tone of what I say on the Sabbath. It forms a sad comment on my preaching.

I have traced, I think, some of the evil that lies at the root of this. We are more concerned to be thought gentlemen than to be felt as ministers. Now being desirous to be thought a man who has kept good company, strikes at the root of that rough work—the bringing of God into his own world. It is hard and rough work to bring God into his own world. To talk of a Creator, and Preserver, and Redeemer, is an outrage on the feelings of most companies.

There is an important truth in what Mr. Wesley said to his preachers, when rightly understood, however it may have been ridiculed:—"You have no more to do with being gentlemen than dancing-masters." The character of a minister is far beyond that of a mere gentleman. It takes a higher walk. He will, indeed, study to be a real gentleman: he will be the farthest possible from a rude man: he will not disdain to learn nor to practise the decencies of society: but he will sustain a still higher character.

It is a snare to a minister when in company, to be drawn out to converse largely on the state of the funds, and on the news of the day. He should know the world, and what

is doing in the world, and should give things of this nature their due place and proportion; but if he can be drawn out to give twenty opinions on this or that subject of politics or literature, he is lowered in his tone. A man of sense feels something violent in the transition from such conversation to the Bible and to prayer.

Dinner-visits can seldom be rendered really profitable to the mind. The company are so much occupied, that little good is to be done. A minister should show his sense of the value of time: it is a sad thing when those around him begin to yawn. He must be a man of business. It is not sufficiently considered how great the sin of idleness is. We talk in the pulpit of the value of time, but we act too little on what we say.

Let a minister who declines associating much with his hearers, satisfy himself that he has a good reason for doing so. If reproached for not visiting them so much as they wish, let him have a just reason to assign. A man who is at work for his family, may have as much love for them as the wife, though she is always with them.

I fell into a mistake, when a young man, in thinking that I could talk with men of the world on their own ground, and could thus win them over to mine. I was fond of painting, and so talked with them on that subject.

This pleased them; but I did not consider that I gave a consequence to their pursuits which does not belong to them; whereas I ought to have endeavoured to raise them above these, that they might engage in higher. I did not see this at the time; but I now see it to have been a great error. A wealthy man builds a fine house, and opens to himself fine prospects; he wants you to see them, for he is sick of them himself. They thus draw you into their schemes. A man has got ten thousand pounds; you congratulate him upon it, and that without any intimation of his danger or his responsibility. Now you may tell him in the pulpit that riches are nothing worth; but you will tell him this in vain, while you tell him out of it that they are worth something.

Lord Chesterfield says, a man's character is degraded when he is to be had. A minister ought never to be had.

ON A MINISTER'S ENCOURAGING ANIMADVERSION ON HIMSELF.

It is a serious inquiry for a minister, how far he should encourage animadversion on himself in his hearers. He will encounter many ignorant and many censorious remarks, but he may gain much on the whole. He should lay down to himself a few principles.

It is better that a minister smart than mistake. It is better that a traveller meet a surly, impertinent fellow to direct him in his way, than lose his way. A minister is so important in his office, that, whatever others think of it, he should regard this and this only as the transaction for eternity. But a man may be labouring in the fire; he may be turning the world upside down, and yet be wrong. You say he must read his Bible. True! but he must use all means. He must build his usefulness on this principle—"if by *any* means." If the wheel hitches, let him, by any means, discover where it hitches. This principle is to be worked continually in his mind. He must labour to keep it up to a fine, keen edge. Let him never believe that his view of himself is sufficient. A merchant sailing in quest of gain, is so intent on his object, that he will take a hint from any man. If we had all the meaning to which we pretend in our pursuits, we should feel and act like him.

A minister must lay it down also as a principle, that he will never sufficiently understand his own pride and self-love; and that confidence in his own sense, which cleaves closely to every man. He must consider this as the general malady. Man is blind and obstinate, poor and proud. This silly creature, through ignorance of this principle, will

not only not hear a vulgar hearer who animadverts on him; but he will scarcely listen to a superior man among his hearers. He attends to such a one, because it would be indecent not to attend. But he finds some excuse for himself in his own bosom. He reverences what is said very little, if at all. He strokes and flatters himself, and makes up the matter very well in his own mind.

A minister should consider how much more easily a weak man can read a wise man, than a wise man can read himself: and that for this reason, no man can see and hear himself. He is too much formed in his own habits, his family notions, his closet notions, to detect himself. He, who stands by and sees a game played, has vast advantages over the players. Besides, preachers err systematically, learnedly, scientifically. The simple hearer has an appeal to nature in his heart. He can often feel that his minister is wrong, when he is not able to set him right. Dr. Manton, no doubt, thought he had preached well, and as became him, before the Lord Mayor: but he felt himself reproved and instructed, when a poor man pulled him by the sleeve and told him he had understood nothing of his sermon. There was an appeal in this poor man's breast to nature: nature could not make anything of the Doctor's learning. When Apelles

took his stand behind his picture he was a wise man: and he was a wise man, too, when he altered the shoe on the hint of the cobbler: the cobbler, in his place, was to be heard.

A minister should consider, too, that few will venture to speak to a public man. It is a rare thing to hear a man say, "Upon my word that thing, or your general manner, is defective or improper." If a wise man says this, he shows a regard, which the united stock of five hundred flatterers will not equal. I would set down half the blunders of ministers to their not listening to animadversion. I have heard it said—for the men who would animadvert on us, talk among themselves, if we refuse to let them talk to us—I have heard it said, "Why don't you talk to him?" "Why don't you talk to him! because he will not hear!"

Let him consider, moreover, that this aversion from reproof is not wise. This is a symptom of the disease. Why should he want this hushing up of the disorder? This is a mark of a little mind. A great man can afford to lose: a little insignificant fellow is afraid of being snuffed out.

A minister mistakes who should refuse to read any anonymous letters. He may, perhaps, see nothing in them the first time; but, let him read them again and again. The writer raises his superstructure, probably, on

a slight basis; yet there is generally some sort of occasion. If he points out but a small error, yet that is worth detecting.

In the present habits of men, it is so difficult to get them to tell the naked truth, that a minister should show a disposition to be corrected: he should show himself to be sensible of the want of it. He is not to encourage idle people: that could be productive of no possible good.

These are some of the reasons for a minister's encouragement in a judicious manner, of animadversion on himself in his hearers.

Sometimes, however, a man will come who appears to be an impertinent man, independently of what he has to remark—a man who is evidently disposed to be troublesome. Such a man came to me, with, "Sir, you said such a thing that seemed to lean to the doctrine of universal redemption. Pray, sir, may I speak a little with you on that subject?" The manner of the man at once marked his character. He seemed to bring with him this kind of sentiment, "I'll go and set that man right. I'll call that man to account." It was a sort of democratic insolence of mind. Instead of answering him as he expected, I treated him as a child. I turned it into an occasion of preaching a sermon to him:—"Sir, do you come to instruct me, or to be instructed? Before we enter on a question

which has exercised the greatest men, we want a preparedness of mind; we want a deep humility, a teachableness, a spirit of dependence, of which you seem to me to have but little."

On the other hand, a man may come, quite as ignorant as the other, yet a simple character. I have distressed him. Though he cannot, perhaps be made to understand what he inquires about; yet a minister should say to himself, "Have I puzzled him? He is wounded, and he comes for help."

A minister should remember that he is not always to act and speak authoritatively. He sits on his friend's chair, and his friend says his things to him with frankness. They may want perhaps a little decorum; but he should receive them in the most friendly and good humoured way in the world. A thing strikes this man and that man; he may depend on it, that it has some foundation.

But there are persons, whom a minister should more than encourage to animadvert on him. He should employ them. He should explain himself to them. He does not merely want an account of his sermon, but he employs them on business. To such sensible persons, he will say, "What serious judgment do you form of my preaching? Do tell me what sort of man I am."

A minister has to treat with another sort

of hearers—uncandid men, and yet men of capacity; a sort of men who are now pleased, and then displeased. They spy a blot everywhere. He is likely to make a mistake with regard to such men:—"What signifies the opinion of that man? That man can never be pleased." True! that man cannot be pleased; but it does not follow that he tells you no truth. In treating with such a man he should say, "His edge may be too keen for candour and sound judgment; yet if it lays open to me what I could not otherwise see, let me improve by its keenness. What hurt can he do to me? He may damp or irritate others, by talking thus to them; but let me learn what is to be learnt from him." Such a man lifts a minister from his standing, where he settles down too easily and firmly. If I know a man to be of this class, I will distinguish: "This is the man; but that is myself!" If I would write a book to stand the fire, let me find out the severest censor. My friend is but half the man; there is a consentaneousness of sentiment between us; we have fallen in together, till we scarcely know how to differ from each other. Let the man come who says, "Here I can discover you to yourself—and there!" The best hints are obtained from snarling people. Medicaments make the patient smart, but they heal.

Yet a minister must not take this in the gross. He is not to invite rude men round his door. If he suffer his hearers to treat him irreverently, if he allow them to dispute with him on every occasion, he will bring ruin on the Church. "The priest's lips must keep knowledge." If a parent allow his children to question everything, so that nothing is to be settled without a hundred proofs, they will soon despise their teacher, for they will think themselves able to teach him. The minister must have decided superiority and authority, or he will want one of the principal qualities of his ministry. This is not inconsistent with receiving hints. He may mistake in some things: but he should mark the complexion of his congregation in deciding how far they are to be heard on his mistakes. If the people are heady, forward, confident in their own sense, they are never to be encouraged. They are gone too far.

ON THE LIMITS WHICH A MINISTER SHOULD PUT TO THE INDULGENCE OF HIS CURIOSITY WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.

An extreme is to be avoided. Some persons would condemn even rational curiosity. But "the works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure

therein." I would not object, therefore, to visit the museum; or to go to see the rare natural productions often exhibited. I would enlarge, too, my views of men and the world by frequenting the panoramas of cities. And though I would not run after every sight, yet I would use my liberty in selecting. But some are in an opposite extreme. They are found everywhere. But he who sustains the character of a scribe of the kingdom of heaven, ought not to be found everywhere. The man who is seeking a heavenly country, will show the spirit of one whose conversation is there.

There is something in religion, when rightly apprehended, that is masculine and grand. It removes those little desires which are "the constant hectic of a fool."

Everything of the drama, and whatever is so distinctly the course of this world, must be shunned. If a minister take one step into the world, his hearers will take two. Much may be learnt from the sentiments of men of the world. If a man of this character who heard me preach, should meet me where he would say, "Why, I did not expect to see you here!" then he ought not to have seen me there.

There must be measure and proportion in our attention to arts and sciences. These were the very idols of the heathen world:

and what are they, who now follow them with an idolatrous eagerness but like children, who are charmed with the sparkling of a rocket, and yet see nothing in the sun?

Yet I would not indulge a cynical temper. If I go through a gentleman's gallery of pictures, I would say, "This is an admirable Claude!" but I would take occasion to drop a hint of something higher and better, and to make it felt that I fell in with these things rather incidentally than purposely. But all this must be done with tenderness and humility. "I tread on the pride of Plato," said Diogenes, as he walked over Plato's carpet. "Yes—and with more pride," said Plato.

"They pass best over the world," said queen Elizabeth, "who trip over it quickly: for it is but a bog. If we stop, we sink."

I would not make it my criterion—"Christ would not come hither!" I must take a lower standard in these things. I am a poor creature, and must be contented to learn in many places and by many scenes, which Christ need not to have frequented.

ON THE MEANS OF PROMOTING A SPIRIT OF DEVOTION IN CONGREGATIONS.

Let us ask, "What is man?" He is a creature of feeling as well as of intellect. We must interest him as we can. It is unphilosophical to depend on the mere statement of truth. No doubt there is a contrary error: for what is the end of exciting attention, if there is nothing deserving attention?

It is of the first importance to put meaning into every part of the service. In either extreme, of appealing to the understanding or the feelings, there may be no meaning: in a dull and lifeless preacher, there is no meaning; and in one of a contrary character, there may be nothing worthy of the name.

There is, besides, too little attention, in many churches, to man as man. I would consult his convenience in all lawful points. If he could sit easier on cushions, he should have cushions. I would not tell him to be warm in God's service, while I leave him to shiver with cold. No doors should creak: no windows should rattle.

Music has an important effect on devotion. Wherever fantastical music enters, it betrays a corrupt principle. A congregation cannot enter into it; or if it does, it cannot be a Christian congregation. Wherever there is

an attempt to set off the music in the service, and the attempt is apparent, it is the first step toward carnality. Though there is too little life in the style of music adopted among the Moravians, yet the simplicity of Christianity pervades their devotion.

Order is important. Some persons, by coming in when they please, propagate a loose habit of mind. For man is a sympathetic creature; and what he sees others neglect, he is in danger of growing negligent in himself. If the reader goes through the service as though the great business for which they are assembled is not yet begun, the people will soon feel thus themselves.

The minister should take occasion frequently to impress on the people the importance of the work in which they are engaged. It is not enough to take it for granted that they feel this. We must take nothing for granted. Man needs to be reminded of everything, for he soon forgets everything.

Monotony must be, above all things, avoided. The mind is vagrant: monotony cannot recall it. There may be continued vehemence, while the attention is not excited; it is disturbance and noise: there is nothing to lead the mind into a useful train of thought or feeling.

There is an opposite error to vehemence. Men of sense and literature depress devotion

by treating things abstractedly. Simplicity, with good sense, is of unspeakable value. Religion must not be rendered abstract and curious. If a curious remark presents itself, reserve it for another place. The hearer gets away from the bustle and business of the week; he comes trembling under his fears; he would mount upward in his spirit; but a curious etymological disquisition chills and repels him.

In truth, we should be men of business in our congregations. We should endeavour both to excite and instruct our hearers. We should render the service an interesting affair in all its parts. We should rouse men; we should bind up the broken-hearted; we should comfort the feeble-minded; we should support the weak; we should become all things to all men, if by any means we may save some.

ON THE MARRIAGE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

It seems to me, that many men do not give sufficient weight to our Lord's observations upon those "who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," nor to Paul's reasoning on the subject of marriage. I would only imply, that both our Lord and the apostle seem to establish it as a principle, that a single state when it can be

chosen and is chosen for the sake of the gospel, is the superior state. This, I fear, is too much forgotten; and those men, who might have received the saying, and have done more service to the church of God by receiving it, have given it little or no weight in their deliberations.

And yet it ought to be considered, that the very character which would best fit men for living in a single state, would abstract them too much from the feelings and wants of their people. I am fully sensible that I should have been hardened against the distresses of my hearers, if I had not been reduced from my natural stoicism by domestic sufferings.

The cases, I allow, are extremely few, in which a man may do, on the whole, more service to the church, by imitating Paul, than by marrying; yet there are such cases; and it behoves every minister seriously to consider himself and his situation, before he determines on marriage. He should not regard this state as indispensably necessary to him, but should always remember, that, *caeteris paribus*, he, who remains single, is most worthy of honour.

But, when it is proper that a minister should marry, and he has determined to do it, how few select such women as suit their high and holy character! A minister is like a man who has undertaken to traverse the

world. He has not only fair and pleasant ground to travel over, but he must encounter deserts and marshes and mountains. The minister wants a firm and steady stay. His wife should be, above all things, a woman of faith and prayer; a woman, too, of a sound mind, and of a tender heart; and one who will account it her glory to lay herself out in co-operating with her husband by meeting his wants and soothing his cares. She should be his unfailing resource, so far as he ought to seek this in the creature. Blessed is she, who is thus qualified and thus lives!

But after all, the married minister, if he would live devotedly, must move in a determined sphere. Whatever his wife may be, yet she is a woman—and if things are to go on well, they must have two separate worlds. There may, indeed, be cases, when a man with something of a soft and feminine cast about his mind, may be united to a woman of a mind so superior and cultivated, that he may choose to make it his plan that they shall move in the same world. In such rare cases it may be done with less inconvenience than in any other. But, even here, the highest end is sacrificed to feeling. Every man, whatever be his natural disposition, who would urge his powers to the highest end, must be a man of solitary studies. Some uxorious men of considerable minds have

moved so much in the women's world, that reflection, disquisition, and the energies of thought, have been ruined by the habit of indulging the lighter, softer, and more playful qualities. Such a man is indeed the idol of the female world; but he would rather deserve to be so, if he stood upon his own ground, while he attempted to meet their wants, instead of descending to mingle among them.

God has put a difference between the sexes, but education and manners have put a still greater. They are designed to move in separate spheres, but occasionally to unite together in order to soften and relieve each other. To attempt any subversion of God's design herein, is being wiser than he who made us; and who has so established this affair that each sex has its separate and appropriate excellence—only to be attained by pursuing it in the order of nature. Thought is or ought to be the characterizing feature of the man, and feeling that of the woman.

Every man and woman in the world has an appropriate mind; and that in proportion to their strength of thought and feeling. All have a way of their own, a habit, a system, a world, separated and solitary, in which no person on earth can have communion with them. Job says of God, "He knoweth the way that I take;" and, when the Christian

finds a want of competency in his bosom friend to understand and meet his way, he turns with an especial nearness and familiarity of confidence to God, who knoweth it in all its connections and associations, its peculiarities and its imperfections.

I may be thought to speak harshly of the female character; but whatever persuasion I have of its intended distinction from that of man, I esteem a woman, who aims only to be what God designed her to be, as honourable as any man on earth. She stands not in the same order of excellence, but she is equally honourable.

But women have made themselves, and weak men have contributed to make them, what God never designed them to be. Let any thinking man survey the female character as it now stands—often nervous, debilitated, and imaginative, and this superinduced chiefly by education and manners—and he will find it impossible that any great vigour of mind can be preserved, or any high intellectual pursuits cultivated, so far as this character stands in his way.

"Doing as others do," is the prevalent principle of the present female character, to whatever absurd, preposterous, masculine, or even wicked lengths it may lead. This is so far as it prevails with man or woman, the ruin,

death, and grave of all that is noble, and virtuous, and praise-worthy.

A studious man, whose time is chiefly spent at home, and especially a minister, ought not to have to meet the imaginary wants of his wife. The disorders of an imaginative mind are beyond calculation. He is not worthy the name of a husband, who will not with delight nurse his wife, with all possible tenderness and love, through a real visitation, however long; but he is ruined if he falls upon a woman of a sickly fancy. It is scarcely to be calculated what an influence the spirit of his wife will have on his own, and on all his ministerial affairs. If she comes not up to the full standard, she will so far impede him, derange him, unsanctify him.

If there is such a thing as good in this world, it is in the ministerial office. The affairs of this employment are the greatest in the world. In prosecuting these with a right spirit, the minister keeps in motion a vast machine; and, such are the incalculable consequences of his wife's character to him, that, if she assist him not in urging forward the machine, she will hang as a dead weight upon its wheels.

A woman may have a high taste; her natural temper may be peevish and fretful; she may have a delicate and fastidious mind; she may long for everything she sees. It is

not enough that she is, in reality, a pious woman. Her taste, her mind, her manners, must have a decorum and congruity to her husband's office and situation. She must bear to be crossed in her wishes for unsuitable objects; he will say, with firmness, "This shall not be. It is not enough, that it would gratify you: it is wrong. It is not enough that it is not flagrantly sinful: it is improper, unsuitable to our character and station.* It is not enough that money will buy it, and I have got money: it will be a culpable use of our talent. It is not enough that your friend possesses such a thing: we stand or fall to our own Master."

ON VISITING DEATH-BEDS.

I HAVE found it, in many cases, a difficult thing to deal with a death-bed. We are called in to death-beds of various kinds:—

The true pilgrim sends for us to set before him the food on which he has fed throughout the journey. He has a keen appetite. He wants strength and vigour for the last effort; and, then, all is for ever well! He is gone home, and is at rest!

Another man sends for us because it is de-

* Nec, tibi, quid liceat, sed quid fecisse decebit,
Occurrat. CLAUDIAN, J. P.

cent; or his friends importune him; or his conscience is alarmed; but he is ignorant of sin and salvation. He is either indifferent about both, or he has made up his mind in his own way; he wants the minister to confirm him in his own views, and smooth over the wound. I have seen such men mad with rage, while I have been beating down their refuges of lies, and setting forth to them God's refuge. There is a wise and holy medium to be observed in treating such cases;—"I am not come to daub you over with untempered mortar; I am not come to send you to the bar of God with a lie in your right-hand. But neither am I come to mortify you, to put you to unnecessary pain, to imbitter you, or to exasperate you." There is a kindness, affection, tenderness, meekness, and patience, which a man's feelings and conscience will condemn him while he opposes. I have found it a very effectual method to begin with myself; it awakens attention, conciliates the mind, and insinuates conviction:—"Whatever others think of themselves, I stand condemned before God; my heart is so desperately wicked, that, if God had not showed me in his word a remedy in Jesus Christ, I should be in despair. I can only tell you what I am, and what I have found. If you believe yourself to be what God has told me I am and all men are, then I can tell

you where and how to find mercy and eternal life; if you will not believe you are this sort of man, I have nothing to offer you. I know of nothing else for man, beside that which God has showed me." My descriptions of my own fallen nature have excited perfect astonishment. Sometimes my patients have seemed scarcely able to credit me, but I have found that God has fastened, by this means, conviction on the conscience. In some cases, an indirect method of addressing the conscience may apparently be, in truth, the most direct; but we are to use this method wisely and sparingly. It seems to me to be one of the characteristics of the day, in the religious world, to err on this subject. We have found out a circuitous way of exhibiting truth. The plain, direct, simple exhibition of it is often abandoned, even where no circumstances justify and require a more insinuating manner. There is dexterity indeed, and address in this; but too little of the simple declaration of the testimony of God, which Paul opposes to "excellency of speech or of wisdom," and to "enticing words of man's wisdom." We have done very little when we have merely persuaded men to think as we do.

But we have to deal with a worse death-bed character, than with the man who opposes the truth. Some men assent to everything which we propose. They will even anticipate us.

And yet we see that they mean nothing. I have often felt when with such persons: "I would they could be brought to contradict and oppose! That would lead to discussion. God might, peradventure, dash the stony heart in pieces. But this heart is like water. The impression dies as fast as it is made." I have sought for such views as might rouse and stir up opposition. I have tried to irritate the torpid mind. But all in vain. I once visited a young clergyman of this character, who was seized with a dangerous illness at a coffee-house in town, whither some business had brought him. The first time I saw him, we conversed very closely together; and, in the prospect of death, he seemed solicitous to prepare for it. But I could make no sort of impression upon him: all I could possibly say met his entire approbation, though I saw his heart felt no interest in it. When I visited him a second time, the fear of death was gone: and, with it, all solicitude about religion. He was still civil and grateful, but he tried to parry off the business on which he knew I came. "I will show you, sir, some little things with which I have worn away the hours of my confinement and solitude." He brought out a quantity of pretty and tasty drawings. I was at a loss how to express, with suitable force and delicacy, the high sense I felt of his indecorum and insipidity, and to

leave a deep impression on his conscience. I rose, however, instantly, said my time was expired, wished him well, and withdrew.

Sometimes we have a painful part to act with sincere men, who have been carried too much into the world. I was called in to visit such a man. "I find no comfort," he said. "God veils his face from me. Everything round me is dark and uncertain." I did not dare to act the flatterer. I said—"Let us look faithfully into the state of things. I should have been surprised if you had not felt thus. I believe you to be sincere. Your state of feelings evinces your sincerity. Had I found you exulting in God, I should have concluded that you were either deceived or a deceiver: for, while God acts in his usual order, how could you expect to feel otherwise on the approach of death, than you do feel? You have driven hard after the world. Your spirit has been absorbed in its cares. Your sentiment, your conversation have been in the spirit of the world. And have you any reason to expect the response of conscience, and the clear evidence which await the man who has walked and lived in the closest friendship with God! You know that what I say is true." His wife interrupted me, by assuring me that he had been an excellent man. "Silence!" said the dying penitent, "it is all true!"

Soon after I came to St. John's, I was called on to visit a dying lady, whom I saw many times before her death. I found that she had taken God for her portion and rest. She approached him with the penitence of a sinner grateful for his provision of mercy in Christ. She told me she had found religion in her Common Prayer Book. She blessed God that she had "always been kept steady to her church; and that she had never followed the people called Methodists, who were seducing so many on all sides." I thought it would be unadvisable to attempt the removal of prejudices, which, in her dying case, were harmless, and which would soon be removed by the light which would beam in on her glorified soul. We had more interesting subjects of conversation, from which this would have led us away. Some persons may tax her with a want of charity: but, alas! I fear they are persons, who knowing more than she did of the doctrines of the gospel, have so little of its divine charity in their hearts, that, as they cannot allow for her prejudices, neither would they have been the last to stigmatize her as a dead formalist and a pharisee. God knoweth them that are his; and they are often seen by him, where we see them not. Were a benighted inhabitant of Otaheite to feel the wretchedness of his present life, and lift up his soul to the God he worshipped as a

Supreme Being for happiness, no doubt God would hear such a prayer.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

EVERY book really worth a minister's studying he ought, if possible, to have in his own library. I have used large libraries, but I soon left them. Time was frittered away: my mind was unconcentrated. Besides, the habit which it begets of turning over a multitude of books is a pernicious habit. And the usual contents of such libraries are injurious to a spiritual man, whose business it is to transact with men's minds. They have a dry, cold, deadening effect. It may suit dead men to walk among the dead; but send not a living man to be chilled among the ruins of "Tadmor in the wilderness!"

CHRISTIANITY is so great and surprising in its nature, that, in preaching it to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation. It is no difficult thing to change a man's opinions. It is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions. It is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate man to passionate zeal for some reli-

gious party. But, to bring a man to love God, to love the law of God, while it condemns him, to loathe himself before God, to tread the earth under his feet, to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done: and bids me go forth and preach, that by me as his instrument, he may effect these great ends; and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry, perhaps, with a man, because he will not let me convert him; in spite of all I can say, he will still love the world.

PAUL admonishes Timothy to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It sometimes falls to the lot of a minister to endure the hard labour of a nurse, in a greater measure than that of a soldier. He has to encounter the difficulties of a peculiar situation; he is the parent of a family of children, of various tempers, manners, habits, and prejudices. If he does not continually mortify himself, he will bear hardly upon some of his children. He has, however, to endure the hardness of calling his child, his friend, to an account; of being thought a severe, jealous, legal man. If a man will let matters take their chance, he may live smoothly and qui-

etly enough; but if he will stir among the servants, and sift things to the bottom, he must bear the consequences. He must account himself a man of strife. His language must be—"It is not enough that you feed me, or fill my pocket; there is something between me and thee." The most tender and delicate of his flock have their failings. His warmest and most zealous supporters break down somewhere. A sunshiny day breeds most reptiles. It is not enough, therefore, that the sun shines out in his church. It is not enough that numbers shout applause.

A minister may be placed in a discouraging situation. He may not suit the popular taste. He may not be able to fall into the fashionable style. He may not play well on an instrument. Though an effective man, and a man of energy, he may be under a cloud. The door may be shut against him. Yet it is a dangerous thing for such a man to force open the door. He should rather say—"I have a lesson to learn here. If I teach the people nothing, perhaps they may teach me." The work of winter is to be done, as well as the work of summer.

The hardness which I have to endure is this—Here are a number of families which show me every kind of regard. But I see that they are not right. They somehow so combine the things which they hear, with the

things which they do, that I am afraid they will at last lie down in sorrow! Here is my difficulty. I must meet them with gentleness; but I must detect and uncover the evil. I shall want real kindness and common honesty if I do not. "Ephraim hath gray hairs; yet he knoweth it not. Ephraim is a cake not turned." But, if I tell him these things, he and I shall become two persons. He must, however, be so touched in private; for he will not be touched in the pulpit. He will say I am not the man.

A MINISTER must keep under his body and bring it into subjection. A Newmarket groom will sweat himself thin, that he may be fit for his office: "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible!"

—— is come from college. He has a refined, accurate, sensible mind. Some of our friends wished to get him a station at Calcutta. They think him just adapted for that sphere. I differ widely in my view of the matter. A new man, with his college accuracy about him, is not the man for the dissipated and fashionable court at Calcutta. Such a congregation will bid nothing for his acuteness and reasoning. He, who is to talk to them with any effect, must have seen life and the world. He must be able to treat with

them on their own ground. And he must be able to do it with the authority of a messenger from God, not with the arts and shifts of human eloquence and reasonings. Dr. Patten said admirably well, in a sermon which I heard him preach at Oxford; "Beware how you suffer the infidel to draw you upon metaphysical ground. If he get you there, he will have something to say. The evidences and the declarations of God's word are the weapons with which he must be combatted, and before which he must fall."

London is very peculiar as a ministerial walk. Almost all a minister can do, is by the pulpit and the pen. His hearers are so occupied in the world, that if he visit them, every minute, perhaps, brings in some interruption.

It is a serious question: "Whether a minister ought to preach at all beyond his experience." He is to stand forth as a witness; but a witness of what he knows, not of what he has been told. He must preach as he feels. If he feels not as he might and ought, he must pray for such feelings; but, till he has them, ought he to pretend to them? Going faster than the experience led, has been the bane of many. Men have preached in certain terms and phrases according to the

tone given by others, while the thing has never been made out even to their conviction, much less in their experience.

It is a most important point of duty, in a minister, to redeem time. A young minister has sometimes called an old one out of his study, only to ask him how he did. There is a tone to be observed toward such an idler; an intimation may be given, which he will understand, "This is not the house!" In order to redeem time, he must refuse to engage in secular affairs; "No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." He must watch, too, against a dozing away of time; the clock-weight goes down slowly, yet it draws all the works with it.

Owen remarks, that it is not sufficiently considered how much a minister's personal religion is exposed to danger, from the very circumstance of religion being his profession and employment. He must go through the acts of religion; he must put on the appearances of religion; he must utter the language and display the feelings of religion. It requires double diligence and vigilance to maintain, under such circumstances, the spirit of religion. I have prayed; I have talked; I have preached; but now I should perish, after

all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others.

A MINISTER must cultivate a tender spirit. If he does this so as to carry a savour and unction into his work, he will have far more weight than other men. This is the result of a devotional habit. To affect feeling is nauseous and soon detected; but to feel is the readiest way to the hearts of others.

THE leading defect in Christian ministers is want of a devotional habit. The church of Rome made much of this habit. The contests accompanying and following the Reformation, with something of an indiscriminate enmity against some of the good of that church as well as the evil, combined to repress this spirit in the Protestant writings; whereas "the mind of Christ" seems, in fact, to be the grand end of Christianity in its operation upon man.

THERE is a manifest want of spiritual influence on the ministry of the present day. I feel it in my own case, and I see it in that of others. I am afraid that there is too much of a low, managing, contriving, manœuvering temper of mind among us. We are laying ourselves out, more than is expedient, to meet one man's taste, and another man's prejudices. The ministry is a grand and holy affair, and

it should find in us a simple habit of spirit, and a holy but humble indifference to all consequences.

A MAN of the world will bear to hear me read in the desk that awful passage: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." Nay, he will approve it:—"The minister is in the desk: he is reading the lesson of the day." But this very man, were I to go home with him, and tell him in his parlour that most of those whom he knows and loves are going on in that road to eternal destruction, this very man would brand the sentiment as harsh and uncharitable. Though uttered by Christ himself, it is a declaration as fanatical and uncandid, in the judgment of the world, as could be put together in language.

MANY hearers cannot enter into the reasons of the Cross. They adopt what I think is Butler's grand defect on this subject. He speaks of the Cross as an appointment of God, and *therefore* to be submitted to; but God has said much in his word of the reasons of this appointment: that "he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth."

SEVERAL things are required, to enable a minister to attain a proper variety in his manner. He must be in continual practice: if I were to preach but once a month, I should lose the ability of preaching. He must know that his hearers are attached to him—that they will grant him indulgences and liberties. He must, in some measure, feel himself above his congregation. The presence of a certain brother chills me: because I feel that I can talk on no one subject in the pulpit, with which he is not far better acquainted than I am.

THE first duty of a minister is, to call on his hearers to turn to the Lord. "We have much to speak to you upon. We have many duties to urge on you. We have much instruction to give you; but all will be thrown away, till you have turned to the Lord." Let me illustrate this by a familiar comparison. You see your child sinking in the water; his education lies near your heart; you are anxious to train him up so, that he may occupy well the post assigned to him in life. But, when you see him drowning, the first thoughts are—not how you may educate him, but how you may save him. Restore him to life, and then call that life into action.

A DISINTERESTED regard to truth should be, what it very seldom is, the most striking

character in a Christian minister. His purpose should be to make proselytes to truth, and not to anything which may be particular in his views of it. "Read my books," says one. "No!" says another, "read mine." And thus religion is taken up by piece-meal; and the mind is diverted from its true nature by false associations. If the teacher whom this man has chosen for his oracle, disgrace religion by irreligious conduct, he stumbles. He stumbles, because he has not been fixed upon the sole and immovable basis of the religion of the Bible. The mind, well instructed in the Scriptures, can bear to see even its spiritual father make shipwreck of the faith and scandalize the gospel; but will remain itself unmoved. The man is in possession of a treasure, which, if others are foolish enough to abandon, yet they cannot detract anything from the value attached to it in his esteem.

THAT a minister may learn how to magnify his office, let him study the character, the spirit, and the history of Paul. His life and death were one magnifying of his office: mark his object—to win souls!—to execute the will of God! As the man rises in his own esteem, his office sinks; but as the office rises in his view, the man falls. He must be in constant hostility with himself, if he would magnify

his office. He must hold himself in readiness to make sacrifices, when called to do so; he will not barter his office, like Balaam; but will refuse to sell his service, like Michaiah. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, he will refuse to come down from the great work which he has to do. He may be calumniated; but he will avoid hasty vindications of his character. It does not appear that Elisha sent after Naaman to vindicate himself from the falsehoods of Gehazi. There appears to me much true dignity in this conduct: I fear I should have wanted patience to act thus.

Some young ministers have been greatly injured, by taking up their creed from a sort of second or third rate writers. Toplady, perhaps, has said that he has found his preaching most successful, when it has turned on the grand doctrines of Calvinism. A young man admires Toplady, and adopts the same notion concerning his own ministry. But let him turn to a master on the subject. He will find such a man as Traill handling the sovereignty of God, and such high points of doctrine, with a holy and heavenly sweetness; which, while it renders it almost impossible not to receive his sentiments, leaves nothing on the mind but a religious savour.

The grand aim of a minister must be the exhibition of gospel truth. Statesmen may

make the greatest blunders in the world, but that is not his affair. Like a king's messenger, he must not stop to take care of a person fallen down: if he can render any kindness consistently with his duty, he will do it; if not, he will prefer his office.

Our method of preaching is not that by which Christianity was propagated; yet the genius of Christianity is not changed. There was nothing in the primitive method set or formal. The primitive bishop stood up, and read the gospel, or some other portion of Scripture, and pressed on the hearers, with great earnestness and affection, a few plain and forcible truths evidently resulting from that portion of the divine word: we take a text, and make an oration. Edification was then the object of both speaker and hearers; and, while this continues to be the object, no better method can be found. A parable, or history, or passage of Scripture, thus illustrated and enforced, is the best method of introducing truth to any people who are ignorant of it, and of setting it home with power on those who know it; and not formal, doctrinal, argumentative discourses. Truth and simplicity are the soul of an efficacious ministry.

The Puritans were still further removed from the primitive method of preaching: they

would preach fifteen or sixteen sermons on a text. A primitive bishop would have been shocked with one of our sermons; and, such is our taste, we should be shocked with his. They brought forward Scripture: we bring forward our statements. They directed all their observations to throw light on Scripture: we quote Scripture to throw light on our observations. More faith and more grace would make us better preachers; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Chrysostom's was the right method. Leighton's Lectures on Peter approach very near to this method.

In acting on matter, the art of man is mighty. The steam-engine is a mighty machine. But, in religion, the art of man is mere feebleness. The armour of Saul is armour in the camp of the Israelites, or in the camp of the Philistines—but we want the sling and the stone. I honour metaphysicians, logicians, critics, and historians—in their places. Look at facts. Men, who lay out their strength in statements, preach churches empty. Few men have a wisdom so large, as to see that the way which they cannot attain may yet be the best way. I dare not tell most academical, logical, frigid men how little I account of their opinion, concerning the true method of preaching to the popular ear.

I hear them talk, as utterly incompetent judges. Such men would have said Paul was fit only for the Tabernacle. What he would have said they were fit for, I cannot tell. They are often great men—first-rate men—unequalled men—in their class and sphere; but it is not their sphere to manage the world.

If a minister could work miracles, he would do little more than interest the curiosity of men. "I want to eat, and I want to drink, and I do it; I get on with difficulty enough, as things are; and you talk about treating with heaven! I know nothing of the matter, and I want no such thing." This is the language of man's heart. A future thing! An indefinitely future thing! No! if a man could even authoritatively declare, that the day of judgment would be this day seven years, he would have little influence on mankind. Very few would be driven from the play-house, very few from the gaming table, very few from the brothel. The din on 'Change would be very little diminished. I frequently look back on the early periods of my life, and imagine myself treating with such a character as I know I then was. I say to myself, "What now can I possibly say that will affect and interest that young fellow of eighteen?"

Some Christian ministers fail in their effect on their hearers, by not entering as philosophers into the state of human nature. They do not consider how low the patient is reduced, that he is to be treated more as a child, that he is to have milk administered to him, instead of strong meat. They set themselves to plant principles and prove points, when they should labour to interest the heart. But, after all, men will carry their natural character into their ministry. If a man has a dry, logical, scholastic turn of mind, we shall rarely find him an interesting preacher. One in a thousand may meet him, but not more.

The Christian will sometimes be brought to walk in a solitary path. God seems to cut away his props, that he may reduce him to himself. His religion is to be felt as a personal, particular, appropriate possession. He is to feel, that, as there is but one Jehovah to bless, so there seems to him as though there were but one penitent in the universe to be blessed by him. Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre was brought to this state. She might have said, "I know not where Peter is; he is gone away; perhaps into the world; perhaps to weep over his fall. I know not where John is. What are the feelings and states of my brethren, I know not. I am

left here alone. No one accompanies and strengthens me. But if none other will seek my Lord, yet will I seek him!" There is a commanding energy in religious sympathy. A minister, for example, while his preaching seems effective, and life and feeling show themselves around him, moves on with ease and pleasure. But there is much of the man here. If God change the scene, if discouragements meet him, if he seem to be laid by, in any measure, as an instrument, if the love of his hearers to his person and ministry decay, this is a severe trial; yet most of us need this trial, that we may be reduced simply to God, and may feel that the whole affair is between him and ourselves. A dead fish will swim with the stream, whatever be its direction; but a living one will not only resist the stream, but, if it choses, it can swim against it. The soul that lives from God, will seek God, and follow God, more easily and pleasantly indeed, if the stream flow toward the point whither God leads; but still, it will follow God as its sole rest and centre, though the stream of men and opinions would hurry it away from him.

GRAVITY is, doubtless, obligatory on ministers. The apostle connects it with simplicity. Yet it must be natural—not affected. Some men give everything in an oracular

style; this looks like affectation, and will disgust others. They will attribute it to religion; but this is not a sanctified gravity. Other men are always disposed to levity; not that a man of original fancy is to be condemned for thinking in his own way; but the minister must consider that he is a man of a consecrated character; if it should not be difficult to himself to make transitions from levity to gravity, it will be difficult to carry others with him therein. Who has not felt, if God brings him into a trying situation, in which he sees that it is an awful thing to suffer or to die, that gravity is then natural? Everything else is offensive! That, too, is evil, which lets down the tone of a company; when a minister loses his gravity, the company will take liberties with him. Yet, with a right principle, we must not play the fool. Gravity must be natural and simple. There must be urbanity and tenderness in it. A man must not formalize on everything. He who formalizes on everything is a fool; and a grave fool is perhaps more injurious than a light fool.

We are called to build a spiritual house. One workman is not to busy himself in telling another his duty. We are placed in different circumstances, with various talents; and each is called to do what he can. Two

men, equally accepted of God, may be exceedingly distinct in the account which they will give of their employ.

A REGULAR clergyman can do no more in the discharge of his duty, than our church requires of him. He may fall far short of her requirements; but he cannot exceed, by the most devoted life, the duties which he has prescribed. What man on earth is so pernicious a drone as an idle clergyman!—a man, engaged in the most serious profession in the world; who rises to eat, and drink, and lounge, and trifle, and goes to bed; and then rises again, to do the same! Our office is the most laborious in the world. The mind must be always on the stretch, to acquire wisdom and grace, and to communicate them to all who come near. It is well, indeed, when a clergyman of genius and learning devotes himself to the publication of classics and works of literature, if he cannot be prevailed on to turn his genius and learning to a more important end. Enter into this kind of society, what do you hear? "Have you seen the new edition of Sophocles?"—"No! is a new edition of Sophocles undertaken?" and this makes up the conversation, and these are the ends of men, who, by profession, should win souls! I received a most useful hint from Dr. Bacon, then Father of the Univer-

sity, when I was at College. I used frequently to visit him at his living near Oxford. He would say to me, "What are you doing? What are your studies?"—"I am reading so and so."—"You are quite wrong. When I was young I could turn any piece of Hebrew into Greek verse with ease. But, when I came into this parish, and had to teach ignorant people, I was wholly at a loss; I had no furniture. They thought me a great man, but that was their ignorance; for I knew as little as they did, of what it was most important for them to know. Study chiefly what you can turn to good account in your future life." And yet this wise man had not just views of serious religion; he was one of those who are for reforming the parish, making the maids industrious, and the men sober and honest; but when I ventured to ask, "Sir, must not all this be effected by the infusion of a divine principle into the mind, a union of the soul with the great Head of influence?"—"No more of that, no more of that, I pray!"

A WISE minister stands between practical atheism and religious enthusiasm.

A SERMON that has more head infused into it than heart, will not come home with efficacy to the hearers. "You must do so and so: such and such consequences will follow if you

do not: such and such advantages will result from doing it:"—this is cold, dead and spiritless, when it stands alone; or even when it is most prominent. Let the preacher's head be stored with wisdom; but, above all, let his heart so feel his subject, that he may infuse life and interest into it, by speaking like one who actually possesses and feels what he says.

FAITH is the master-spring of a minister. "Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies. Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss. He sends me to proclaim his ability and his love. I want no fourth idea!—every fourth idea is contemptible! every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!"

THE meanness of the earthen vessel, which conveys to others the gospel treasure, takes nothing from the value of the treasure. A dying hand may sign a deed of gift of incalculable value. A shepherd's boy may point out the way to a philosopher. A beggar may be the bearer of an invaluable present.

A WRITER of sermons has often no idea how many words he uses, to which the common people affix either no meaning, or a false one. He speaks, perhaps, of "relation to

God;" but the people, who hear him, affix no other idea to the word, than that of father, or brother, or relative. The preacher must converse with the people, that he may acquire their words and phrases.

It sometimes pleases God to disqualify ministers for their work, before he takes them to their reward. Where he gives them wisdom to perceive this, and grace to acquiesce in the dispensation—such a close of an honourable life, where the desire to be publicly useful survives the power, is a loud amen to all former labours.

ON INFIDELITY AND POPERY.

Infidel writings are ultimately productive of little or no danger to the church of God. Nay, we are less at a loss in judging of the wisdom of Providence in permitting them, than we are in judging of many other of its designs. They may shake the simple, humble, spiritual mind; but they are, in the end, the means of enlightening and settling it.

There are but two sorts of people in the world. Some walk by the light of the Lord, and all others lie in the wicked ones in darkness and in the shadow of death. Where there is not an enlightened, simple, humble,

spiritual mind, notions and opinions are of little consequence. The impudent and refuted misrepresentations of infidels may turn a dark mind to some other notions and way of thinking; but it is in the dark still. Till a man sees by the light of the Lord, every change of opinions is only putting a new dress on a dead carcase, and calling it alive.

The grace of God must give simplicity. Wherever that is, it is a security against dangerous error; wherever it is not, erroneous opinions may perhaps less predispose the mind against the truth of God in its lively power on the soul, than true notions destitute of all life and influence do.

Yet the writings of infidels must be read with caution and fear. There are cold, intellectual, speculative, malignant foes to Christianity. I dare not tamper with such, when I am in my right mind. I have received serious injury, for a time, even when my duty has called me to read what they have to say. The daring impiety of Belsham's answer to Wilberforce ruffled the calm of my spirits. I read it over while at Bath, in the autumn of 1798. I waked in pain, about two o'clock in the morning. I tried to cheer myself by an exercise of faith on Jesus Christ. I lifted up my heart to him, as sympathizing with me and engaged to support me. Many times have I thus obtained quiet and repose; but

now I could lay no hold on him. I had given the enemy an advantage over me: my habit had imbibed poison: my nerves trembled! my strength was gone! "Jesus Christ sympathize with you, and relieve you! It is all enthusiasm! It is idolatry! Jesus Christ has preached his sermons, and done his duty, and is gone to heaven! And there he is, as other good men are! Address your prayers to the Supreme Being!" I obtain relief in such cases, by dismissing from my thoughts all that enemies or friends can say. I will have nothing to do with Belsham or with Wilberforce. I come to Christ himself. I hear what he says. I turn over the gospels. I read his conversations. I dwell especially on his farewell discourse with his disciples in John's gospel. If there be meaning in words, and if Christ were not a deceiver or deceived, the reality of the Christian's life, in him and from him by faith, is written there as with a sunbeam.

This temptation besets me to this day, and I know not that I have any other which is so particular in its attacks upon me. I am sometimes restless in bed; and, when I find myself so, I generally think that the parenthesis cannot be so well employed as in prayer. While my mind is thus ascending to Christ and communing with him, it often comes across me—"What a fool art thou, to ima-

gine these mental effusions can be known to any other Being! What a senseless enthusiast, to imagine that the man who was nailed to a cross can have any knowledge of these secrets of thy soul!" On one of these occasions it struck me with great and commanding evidence—"Why might not John, in the isle of Patmos, imprisoned perhaps in a cave, why might not he have said so? Why might not he have doubted whether Christ the crucified could have knowledge of his feelings, when he 'was in the spirit on the Lord's day?' He had no doubt communion with Christ in the spirit, before he had those palpable evidences of his presence which immediately followed."

In the permission of certain bold infidel characters and writings, we may discern plain evidences of that awful system of judicial government, with which God has been pleased to rule the world. Where there is a moral indisposition; where men are inclined to be deceived; where they are waiting as it were for a leader—there he sends such men and such writings, as harden them in their impiety: while a teachable and humble mind will discern the true character of such men or writings, and escape the danger.

I can conceive a character much more pernicious in its influence, than the daring and

impudent infidel—a man, in the estimation of all the world modest, amiable, benevolent, who should, with deep concern, lament the obligation under which he feels himself to depart from the religion of Europe, the religion of his country, the religion of his family, and should profess his unfeigned desire to find this religion true, but that he cannot possibly bring his mind to believe it, and that for such and such reasons;—when he should thus introduce all the strongest points that can be urged on the subject.

But God governs the world. It is not in his design to permit such men to arise. The infidel has always had something about him, which has ascertained his obliquity to the eye, that has not been dimmed by the moral indisposition of the heart.

THE low and scurrilous writers against revelation carry their own condemnation with them. They are like an ill-looking fellow, who comes into a court of justice to give evidence; but carries the aspect, on the first glance, of a town-bully, ready to swear whatever shall be suggested to him.

THE church has endured a pagan and a papal persecution. There remains for her an infidel persecution—general, bitter, purifying, cementing.

It is, perhaps, impossible, in the very nature of things, that such another scheme as popery could be invented. It is, in truth, the mystery of iniquity, that it should be able to work itself into the simple, grand, sublime, holy institution of Christianity, and so to interweave its abominations with the truth, as to occupy the strongest passions of the soul, and to control the strongest understandings! While Pascal can speak of popery as he does, its influence over the mass of the people can excite no surprise. Those two master principles—That we must believe as the church ordains—and, That there is no salvation out of this church—oppose, in the ignorance and fear which they beget, an almost insuperable barrier against the truth.

I have not such expectations of a millennium as many entertain; yet I believe that the figures and expressions of prophecy have never received their accomplishment. They are too grand and ample, to have been fulfilled by any state, which the church has hitherto seen. Christianity has yet had no face suitable to its dignity. It has savoured hitherto too much of man, of his institutions, of his prejudices, of his follies, of his sin. It must be drawn out, depicted, exhibited, demonstrated to the world. Its chief enemies have been the men by whom, under the pro-

fessions of "Hail, Master!" it has been distorted, abused, and vilified.

Popery is the master-piece of Satan. I believe him utterly incapable of such another contrivance. It is a systematic and infallible plan, for forming manacles and mufflers for the human mind. It is a well laid design to render Christianity contemptible, by the abuse of its principles and its institutions. It was formed to overwhelm, to enchant, to sit as "the great whore, making the earth drunk with her fornications."

The infidel conspiracy approaches nearest to popery. But infidelity is a suicide. It dies by its own malignity. It is known and read of all men. No man was ever injured essentially by it, who was fortified with a small portion of the genuine spirit of Christianity—its contrition and its docility. Nor is it one in its efforts. Its end is one; but its means are disjointed, various, and often clashing. Popery debases and alloys Christianity; but infidelity is a furnace, wherein it is purified and refined. The injuries done to it by popery will be repaired by the very attacks of infidelity.

In the mean time, Christianity wears an enchanting form to all who can penetrate through the mists thrown around it by its false friends and its avowed foes. The exiled French priest raises the pity and indignation

of all Christians, while he describes the infernal plots of the infidel conspirators against Christianity, and shows them in successful operation against his church.* We seem, for a while, to forget her errors: and we view her, for the moment, only so far as she possesses Christianity in common with ourselves. But when he charges the origin of this infidel conspiracy on the principles asserted by the Waldenses or the church of Geneva, the enchantment dissolves. We see that he is under the influence of a sophism, by which, having imposed upon himself, he would impose upon others. With him, Christianity and his church mean one and the same thing. A separation from his church is a separation from Christianity; and proceeds on principles which lead necessarily, if pursued to their issues, to every abomination of infidelity. But let him know that the church of Geneva protested against the false friend of Christianity; and that, if the avowed enemy of Christianity had then elevated himself, she would have protested with equal zeal against him. Let him know, that, if his church had listened to the voice of the reformer, the enemy of Christianity would have wanted ground for footing to his attacks. The papist falsely charges the reformer as the father of

* Alluding to Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism.—J. P.

infidelity: the infidel maliciously confounds popery and Christianity; but the true Christian is as far from the licentiousness of the infidel, as he is from the corruption of the papist.

I am not inclined to view things in a gloomy aspect. Christianity must undergo a renovation. If God has sent his Son, and has declared that he will exalt him on his throne, the earth and all that it inherits are contemptible in the view of such a plan! If this be God's design, proceed it does, and proceed it will. Christianity is such a holy and spiritual affair, that perhaps all human institutions are to be destroyed to make way for it. Men may fashion things as they will; but, if there is no effusion of the Spirit of God on their institutions, they will remain barren and lifeless. Many Christians appear to have forgotten this.

ON A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY IN THESE EVENTFUL TIMES.

Ours is a period of no common kind. The path of duty to a Christian is now unusually difficult. It seems to me, however, to be comprehended in two words, be "quiet" and "useful." The precept is short; but the application of it requires much grace and wis-

dom. Take not a single step out of a quiet obscurity, to which you are not compelled by a sense of utility.

Two parties have divided the world.

The Jacobins are desperadoes—the earth's torment and plague. Bishop Horsley said well of them, lately from the pulpit, "These are they who have poisoned Watts's Hymns for children. These are they who are making efforts to contaminate every means of access to the public mind. And what is their aim? What are their pretensions? That they will have neither Lord nor King over them. But, verily, one is their King, whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is Abaddon; but, in the Greek tongue, he is called Apollyon; and in plain English, 'the Devil.' My soul, come not thou near the tents of these wicked men."

"But the anti-jacobins?" Their project, as a body, leaves God out of the question. Their proposal is unholy. I cannot be insensible to the security, order, and liberty, with which these kingdoms are favoured above all other nations; but I cannot go forth with these men, as one of their party. I cannot throw up my hat, and shout "huzza!" Woe to the world, if even they prevail!

The world is a lying, empty pageant; and these men are ensnared with the show. My part in it, as a Christian, is to act with simplicity as the servant of God. What does

God bid me do? What, in this minute of time, which will be gone and carry me with it into eternity—what is my path of duty? While enemies blaspheme, and friends are beguiled, let me stand on my watch-tower with the prophet, listening what the Lord God shall say to me. In any scheme of man I dare not be drunken. We, who are of the day, must be sober. Churchman or dissenter, if I am a true Christian, I shall talk thus to my connections. The sentiment of the multitude is ensnaring; but the multitude is generally wrong. I must beware of the contagion. Not that I am to push myself into consequence. The matter is between me and my God. Not one step out of a holy quiet and obscurity, but in order to utility.

Yet we must be active and bold, whenever duty calls us to be so. My own conduct, with respect to the religious world, is too much formed on my feelings. I see it in what I deem a lamentable state; but I seem to say, "Well! go on talking, and mistaking, and making a noise; only make not a noise here:" and then I retire into my closet, and shrink within myself. But had I more faith, and simplicity, and love, and self-denial, I might do all I do in my present sphere, but I should throw myself in the midst of them, and entreat and argue and remonstrate.

But then such a man must give himself up

as a sacrifice. He would be misrepresented and calumniated from many quarters. But he would make up his account for such treatment. How would Paul have acted in such a state of the church? Would he not have displayed that warm spirit, which made him say, "O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you?" and that holy self-denial, which dictated, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more exceedingly I love you, the less I be loved?"

It is not to be calculated how much a single man may effect, who throws his whole powers into a thing. Who, for instance, can estimate the influence of Voltaire? He shed an influence of a peculiar sort over Europe. His powers were those of a gay buffoon, far different from those of Hume, and others of his class, but he threw himself wholly into them. It is true these men meet the wickedness or the imbecility of the human mind; but there are many right-hearted people, who hang a long time on the side of pure, silent, simple religion. Let a man who sees things as I do, throw himself out with all his powers, to rescue and guide such persons.

ON FORTIFYING YOUTH AGAINST INFIDEL PRINCIPLES.

I NEVER gathered from infidel writers, when an avowed infidel myself, any solid difficulties, which were not brought to my mind by a very young child of my own. "Why was sin permitted?"—"What an insignificant world is this to be redeemed by the incarnation and death of the Son of God!"—"Who can believe that so few will be saved?" Objections of this kind, in the mind of reasoning young persons, prove to me that they are the growth of fallen nature.

The nurse of infidelity is sensuality. Youth are sensual. The Bible stands in their way. It prohibits the indulgence of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But the young mind loves these things; and, therefore, it hates the Bible which prohibits them. It is prepared to say, "If any man will bring me arguments against the Bible, I will thank him; if not, I will invent them."*

As to infidel arguments, there is no weight in them. They are jejune and refuted. Infidels are not themselves convinced by them.

In combatting this evil in youth, we must

* See "Causes and Cure of Scepticism,"—a little volume published by the Board of Publication.—*Editor of the Board.*

recollect the proverb, that "a man may bring his horse to the water, but cannot make him drink." The minds of the young are preoccupied. They will not listen. Yet a crisis may come. They will stop and bethink themselves.

One promising method with them is, to appeal to facts. What sort of men are infidels? They are loose, fierce, overbearing men. There is nothing in them like sober and serious inquiry. They are the wildest fanatics on earth. Nor have they agreed among themselves on any scheme of truth and felicity. Contrast with the character of infidels that of real Christians.

It is advantageous to dwell, with youth, on the need and necessities of man. "Every pang and grief tells a man that he needs a helper; but infidelity provides none. And what can its schemes do for you in death?"

Impress them with a sense of their ignorance. I silence myself many times a day, by a sense of my own ignorance.

Appeal to their conciences. "Why is it that you listen to infidelity? Is not infidelity a low, carnal, wicked game? Is it not the very picture of the prodigal, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me?" The question why infidelity is received, exposes it, and shows it to the light. Why—why will a man be an infidel? Your chil-

dren may urge difficulties; but tell them that inexplicable difficulties surround you. You are compelled to believe, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, whether you will or no; and shall you not be a believer in the hundredth instance from choice?

Draw out a map of the road of infidelity. It will lead them to such stages, at length, as they never could suspect. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

The spirit and tone of your house will have great influence on your children. If it is what it ought to be, it will often fasten conviction on their minds, however wicked they may become. I have felt the truth of this in my own case; I said, "My father is right, and I am wrong! Oh, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" The bye-conversations in a family are, in this view, of unspeakable importance.

On the whole, arguments addressed to the heart press more forcibly than those addressed to the head. When I was a child, and a very wicked one too, one of Dr. Watts's Hymns sent me to weep in a corner. The Lives in Janeway's Token had the same effect. I felt the influence of faith in suffering Christians. The character of young Samuel came home to me, when nothing else had any hold on my mind.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN.

GREAT wisdom is requisite in correcting the evils of children. A child is bashful perhaps: but, in stimulating this child, we are too apt to forget future consequences. "Hold up your head. Don't be vulgar." At length they hold up their heads; and acquire such airs, that too late we discover our error. We forgot that we were giving gold, to purchase dross. We forgot that we were sacrificing modesty and humility, to make them young actors and old tyrants.*

* The reader cannot but admire the sentiments, which Bishop Hurd has, on this subject, put into the mouth of Mr. Locke, one of his supposed interlocutors in the Dialogue on Foreign Travels.

"Bashfulness is not so much the effect of an ill education, as the proper gift and provision of wise nature. Every stage of life has its own set of manners, that is suited to it, and best becomes it. Each is beautiful in its season; and you might as well quarrel with the child's rattle, and advance him directly to the boy's top and span-farthing, as expect from diffident youth the manly confidence of riper age.

"Lamentable in the mean time, I am sensible, is the condition of my good lady; who, especially if she be a mighty, well bred one, is perfectly shocked at the boy's awkwardness, and calls out on the tailor, the dancing-master, the player, the travelled tutor, any body and every body, to relieve her from the pain of so disgraceful an object.

"She should, however, be told, if a proper season and words soft enough could be found to convey the information, that the odious thing which disturbs her so much, is one of nature's signatures impressed on that age; that bashfulness is but the passage from one season of life to another; and that as

CHRISTIANS are imbibing so much of the cast and temper of the age, that they seem to be anxiously tutoring their children, and preparing them by all manner of means, not for a better world, but for the present. Yet in nothing should the simplicity of faith be more unreservedly exercised, than with regard to children. Their appointments and stations, yea, even their present and eternal happiness or misery, so far as they are influenced by their states and conditions in life, may be decided by the most minute and trivial events, all of which are in God's hand, and not in ours. An unbelieving spirit prevades, in this respect, too intimately the Christian world.

WHEN I meet children to instruct them, I do not suffer one grown person to be present. The Moravians pursue a different method. Some of their elder brethren even sit among the children, to sanction and encourage the work. This is well, provided children are to be addressed in the usual manner. But that will effect little good. Nothing is easier than to talk to children; but, to talk to them as

the body is then the least graceful, when the limbs are making their last efforts and hastening to their just proportion, so the manners are least easy and disengaged, when the mind, conscious and impatient of its perfections, is stretching all its faculties to their full growth."

See Bishop Hurd's Moral and Political Dialogues.

J. P.

they ought to be talked to, is the very last effort of ability. A man must have a vigorous imagination. He must have extensive knowledge, to call in illustrations from the four corners of the earth; for he will make little progress, but by illustration. It requires great genius, to throw the mind into the habit of children's minds. I aim at this, but I find it the utmost effort of ability. No sermon ever put my mind half so much on the stretch. The effort is such, that were one person present, who was capable of weighing the propriety of what I said, it would be impossible for me to proceed: the mind must, in such a case, be perfectly at its ease: it must not have to exert itself under cramps and fetters. I am surprised at nothing which Dr. Watts did, but his Hymns for Children. Other men could have written as well as he, in his other works: but how he wrote these hymns, I know not. Stories fix children's attention. The moment I begin to talk in anything like an abstract manner, the attention subsides. The simplest manner in the world will not make way to children's minds for abstract truths. With stories I find I could rivet their attention for two or three hours.

CHILDREN are very early capable of impression. I imprinted on my daughter the idea of faith, at a very early age. She was

playing one day with a few beads, which seemed to delight her wonderfully. Her whole soul was absorbed in her beads. I said, "My dear, you have some pretty beads there." "Yes, papa!" "And you seem to be vastly pleased with them." "Yes, papa!" "Well now, throw them behind the fire." The tears started into her eyes. She looked earnestly at me, as though she ought to have a reason for such a cruel sacrifice. "Well, my dear, do as you please; but you know I never told you to do anything which I did not think would be good for you." She looked at me a few moments longer, and then, summoning up all her fortitude, her breast heaving with the effort, she dashed them into the fire. "Well," said I; "there let them lie; you shall hear more about them another time; but say no more about them now." Some days after, I bought her a box full of larger beads, and toys of the same kind. When I returned home, I opened the treasure and set it before her: she burst into tears with ecstacy. "Those, my child," said I, "are yours; because you believed me, when I told you it would be better for you to throw those two or three paltry beads behind the fire. Now that has brought you this treasure. But now, my dear, remember, as long as you live, what *faith* is. I did all this to teach you the meaning of *faith*. You

threw your beads away when I bid you, because you had faith in me, that I never advised you but for your good. Put the same confidence in God. Believe everything that he says in his word. Whether you understand it or not, have faith in him that he means your good."

ON FAMILY WORSHIP.

FAMILY religion is of unspeakable importance. Its effect will greatly depend on the sincerity of the head of the family, and on his mode of conducting the worship of his household. If his children and servants do not see his prayers exemplified in his tempers and manner, they will be disgusted with religion. Tediousness will weary them. Fine language will shoot above them. Formality of connection or composition in prayer they will not comprehend. Gloominess or austerity of devotion will make them dread religion as a hard service. Let them be met with smiles. Let them be met as for the most delightful service in which they can be engaged. Let them find it short, savoury, simple, plain, tender, heavenly. Worship, thus conducted, may be used as an engine of vast power in a family. It diffuses a sympathy through the members. It calls off the

mind from the deadening effect of worldly affairs. It arrests every member, with a morning and evening sermon, in the midst of all the hurries and cares of life. It says, "There is a God!"—"There is a spiritual world!"—"There is a life to come!" It fixes the idea of responsibility in the mind. It furnishes a tender and judicious father or master with an opportunity of gently glancing at faults, where a direct admonition might be inexpedient. It enables him to relieve the weight with which subordination or service often sits on the minds of inferiors.

In my family-worship I am not the reader, but employ one of my children. I make no formal comment on the Scripture; but, when any striking event or sentiment arises, I say, "Mark that!"—"See how God judges of that thing!" Sometimes I ask what they think of the matter, and how such a thing strikes them. I generally receive very strange, and sometimes ridiculous answers; but I am pleased with them: attention is all alive, while I am explaining wherein they err, and what is the truth. In this manner I endeavour to impress the spirit and scope of the passage on the family.

I particularly aim at the eradication of a false principle wonderfully interwoven with the minds of children and servants: they take their standard from the neighbourhood and

their acquaintance, and by this they judge of everything. I endeavour to raise them to a persuasion, that God's will in Scripture is the standard; and that this standard is perpetually in opposition to that corrupt one around and before them.

The younger children of the family will soon have discernment enough to perceive that the Bible has a holiness about it, that runs directly contrary to the stream of opinion. And then, because this character is so evident, and so inseparable from the Scripture, the heart will distaste and reject it. Yet the standard must be preserved. If a man should lower it, they would soon detect him; and he must, after all, raise them up to the right standard again. Much may be effected by manner, as to impressing truth; but still truth will remain irksome, till God touch the heart.

I read the Scriptures to my family in some regular order; and am pleased to have thus a lesson found for me. I look on the chapter of the day as a lesson sent for that day; and so I regard it as coming from God for the use of that day, and not of my own seeking.

I find it easy to keep up the attention of a congregation, in comparison of that of my family. I have found the attention best gained by bringing the truths of Scripture into comparison with the facts which are before our eyes. It puts more *stimuli* into family expo-

sitions. I never found a fact lost, or the current news of the day fail of arresting the attention. "How does the Bible account for that fact?—That man murdered his father—This or that thing happened in our house today. What does the Scripture say of such things?"

It is difficult to fix and quiet your family. The servants are eager to be gone, to do something in hand. There has been some disagreement, perhaps, between them and their mistress. We must seize opportunities. We must not drive hard at such times as these. Regularity, however, must be enforced. If a certain hour is not fixed and adhered to, the family will inevitably be found in confusion.

Religion should be prudently brought before a family. The old Dissenters wearied their families. Jacob reasoned well with Esau, about the tenderness of his children, and his flocks and herds. Something gentle, quiet, moderate, should be our aim. There should be no scolding; it should be mild and pleasant.

I avoid absolute uniformity; the mind revolts at it; though I would shun eccentricity, for that is still worse. At one time I would say something on what is read; but, at another time, nothing. I make it as *natural* as possible. "I am a religious man; you

are my children and my servants; it is *natural* that we should do so and so."

Nothing of superstition should attach to family duty. It is not absolutely and in all cases indispensable. If, unavoidably interrupted, we omit it, it is well. If I were peremptorily ordered, as the Jews were, to bring a lamb, I must be absolute. But this service is my liberty, not my task. I do not, however, mean in any degree to relax the proper obligation.

Children and servants should see us acting on the Psalmist's declaration, "I will speak of thy testimony before kings." If a great man happen to be present, let them see that I deem him nothing before the word of God!

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE PARENTAL CHARACTER.

THE influence of the parental character on children is not to be calculated. Everything around has an influence on us. Indeed, the influence of things is so great, that, by familiarity with them, they insensibly urge us on principles and feelings which we before abhorred. A drop of water seems to have no influence on the stone; but will, in the end, wear its way through. If there be therefore such a mighty influence in everything around

us, the parental influence must be great indeed.

Consistency is the great character, in good parents, which impresses children. They may witness much temper; but if they see their father "keep the even tenor of his way," his imperfections will be understood and allowed for as reason opens. The child will see and reflect on his parent's intention; and this will have great influence on his mind. This influence may, indeed, be afterwards counteracted; but that only proves that contrary currents may arise, and carry the child another way. "Old Adam" may be "too strong for young Melancthon."

The implantation of principles is of unspeakable importance, especially when culled from time to time out of the Bible. The child feels his parent's authority supported by the Bible, and the authority of the Bible supported by his parent's weight and influence. Here are data—fixed data. A man can very seldom get rid of these principles. They stand in his way. He wishes to forget them, perhaps; but it is impossible.

Where parental influence does not convert, it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel; but then I liked to be an infidel in company, rather than when

alone. I was wretched when by myself. These principles, and maxims, and data spoiled my jollity. With my companions I could sometimes stifle them: like embers we kept one another warm. Besides, I was here a sort of hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and had to maintain a character before them. But I could not divest myself of my better principles. I went with one of my companions to see "The Minor." He could laugh heartily at mother Cole; I could not. He saw in her the picture of all who talked about religion; I knew better. The ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him; to me, it was none: it could not move my features. He knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation; I did. I knew there was such a thing. I was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man: it harasses him, it throws itself continually in his way.

I find in myself another evidence of the greatness of parental influence. I detect myself to this day, in laying down maxims in my family, which I took up at three or four years of age, before I could possibly know the reason of the thing.

It is of incalculable importance to obtain a hold on the conscience. Children have a conscience; and it is not seared, though it is

evil. Bringing the eternal world into their view; planning and acting with that world before us—this gains at length such a hold on them, that, with all the infidel poison which they may afterward imbibe, there are few children who, at night, in their chamber, in the dark, in a storm of thunder, will not feel. They cannot cheat like other men. They recollect that *eternity*, which stands in their way. It rises up before them, like the ghost of Banquo to Macbeth. It goads them: it thunders in their ears. After all, they are obliged to compound the matter with conscience, if they cannot be prevailed on to return to God without delay:—"I *must* be religious, one time or other. That is clear. I cannot get rid of this thing. Well! I will begin at such a time. I will finish such a scheme, and then!"

The opinions, the spirit, the conversation, the manners of the parent, influence the child. Whatever sort of man he is, such in a great degree, will be the child; unless constitution or accident give him another turn. If the parent is a fantastic man; if he is a genealogist, knows nothing but who married such an one, and who married such an one; if he is a sensualist, a low wretch; his children will usually catch these tastes. If he is a literary man, his very girls will talk learnedly. If he is a griping, hard, miserly man, such will be

his children. This I speak of as *generally* the case. It may happen, that the parent's disposition may have no ground to work on in that of the child. It may happen, that the child may be driven into disgust: the miser, for instance, often implants disgust, and his son becomes a spendthrift.

After all, in some cases, perhaps, everything seems to have been done and exhibited by the pious parent in vain. Yet he casts his bread upon the waters. And, perhaps, after he has been in his grave twenty years, his son remembers what his father told him.

Besides, parental influence must be great because God has said that it shall be so. The parent is not to stand reasoning and calculating. God has said that his character shall have influence.

And this appointment of Providence becomes often the punishment of a wicked man. Such a man is a complete *selfist*. I am weary of hearing such men talk about their "family," and their "family;" they "must provide for their family." Their family has no place in their real regard. They push for themselves. But God says—"No! You think your children shall be so and so. But they shall be rods for your own backs. They shall be your curse. They shall rise up against you." The most common of all human complaints is, parents groaning under

the vices of their children! This is all the effect of parental influence.

In the exercise of this influence there are two leading dangers to be avoided.

Excess of severity is one danger. My mother, on the contrary, would talk to me, and weep as she talked. I flung out of the house with an oath; but wept too when I got into the street. Sympathy is the powerful engine of a mother. I was desperate; I would go on board of a privateer. But there are soft moments to such desperadoes. God does not, at once, abandon them to themselves. There are times when the man says—"I should be glad to return, but I should not like to meet that face!" if he has been treated with severity.

Yet excess of laxity is another danger. The case of Eli affords a serious warning on this subject. Instead of his mild expostulation on the flagrant wickedness of his sons—"Nay, my sons, it is no good report that I hear"—he ought to have exercised his authority as a parent and magistrate, in punishing and restraining their crimes.

REMARKS ON AUTHORS.

When I look at the mind of Lord Bacon, it seems vast, original, penetrating, analogi-

cal, beyond all competition. When I look at his character, it is wavering, shuffling, mean. In the closing scene, and in that only, he appears in true dignity, as a man of profound contrition.

BAXTER surpasses, perhaps, all others, in the grand, impressive, and persuasive style. But he is not to be named with Owen as to furnishing the student's mind. He is, however, multifarious, complex, practical.

CLARKE has, above all other men, the faculty of lowering the life and spiritual sense of Scripture to such perfection, as to leave it like dry bones, divested of every particle of marrow or oil. SOUTH is nearer the truth. He tells more of it; but he tells it with the tongue of a viper, for he was most bitterly set against the Puritans. But there is a spirit and life about him. He must and will be heard. And now and then, he darts on us with an unexpected and incomparable stroke.

THE modern German writers, and the whole school formed after them, systematically and intentionally confound vice and virtue, and argue for the passions against the morals and institutions of society. There never was a more dangerous book written, than one that Mrs. Wolstonecraft left imperfect, but which Godwin published after her

death. Her "Wrongs of Women" is an artful apology for adultery. She labours to interest the feelings in favour of an adulteress, by making her crime the consequence of the barbarous treatment of a despicable husband, while she is painted all softness and sensibility. Nothing like this was ever attempted before the modern school.

"SOME men," says Dr. Patten to me, "are always crying fire! fire!" To be sure—where there is danger there ought to be affectionate earnestness. Who would remonstrate, coldly and with indifference, with a man about to precipitate himself from Dover Cliff, and not rather snatch him forcibly from destruction? Truth, in its living influence on the heart, will show itself in consecratedness and holy zeal. When teachers of religion are destitute of these qualities, the world readily infers that religion itself is a farce. Let us do the world justice. It has very seldom found a considerate, accommodating, and gentle, but withal earnest, heavenly, and enlightened teacher. When it has found such, truth has received a very general attention. Such a man was Hervey, and his works have met their reward.

HOMER approaches nearest of all the heathen poets to the grandeur of Hebrew poetry.

With the theological light of Scripture, he would have wonderfully resembled it.

HOOKER is incomparable in strength and sanctity. His first books are wonderful. I do not so perfectly meet him as he advances toward the close.

LOSKIEL'S "Account of the Moravian missions among the North American Indians" has taught me two things. I have found it a striking illustration of the uniformity with which the grace of God operates on men. Crantz, in his "Account of the missions in Greenland," had shown the grace of God working on a man-fish: on a stupid, sottish, senseless creature, scarcely a remove from the fish on which he lived. Loskiel shows the same grace working on a man-devil: on a fierce, bloody, revengeful warrior, dancing his infernal war-dance with the mind of a fury. Divine grace brings these men to the same point. It quickens, stimulates, and elevates the Greenlander; it raises him to a sort of new life; it seems almost to bestow on him new senses; it opens his eye, and bends his ear, and rouses his heart; and what it adds, it sanctifies. The same grace tames the high spirit of the Indian; it reduces him to the meekness, and docility, and simplicity of a child. The evidence arising to Christianity from these facts is, perhaps, seldom

sufficient, by itself, to convince the gainsayer; but, to a man who already believes, it greatly strengthens the reasons of his belief. I have seen also in these books that, the fish-boat, and the oil, and the tomahawk, and the cap of feathers excepted, a Christian minister has to deal with just the same sort of creatures as the Greenlander and the Indian, among civilized nations.

Owen stands at the head of his class of divines. His scholars will be more profound and enlarged, and better furnished, than those of most other writers. His work on the Spirit has been my treasure-house and one of my first-rate books. Such writers as Riccaltoun rather disqualify than prepare a minister for the immediate business of the pulpit. Original and profound thinkers enlarge his views, and bring into exercise the powers and energies of his own mind, and should therefore be his daily companions. Their matter must, however, be ground down before it will be fit for the pulpit. Such writers as Owen, who, though less original, have united detail with wisdom, are copious in proper topics, and in matter better prepared for immediate use, and in furniture ready finished, as it were, for the mind.

Paley is an unsound casuist, and is likely to do great injury to morals. His extenua-

tion of the crimes committed by an intoxicated man for instance, is fallacious and dangerous. Multiply the crime of intoxication into the consequences that follow from it, and you have the sum total of the guilt of a drunken man.

RUTHERFORD'S Letters is one of my classics. Were truth the beam, I have no doubt, that if Homer and Virgil and Horace, and all that the world has agreed to idolize, were weighed against that book, they would be lighter than vanity. He is a real original. There are in his letters some inexpressibly forcible and arresting remonstrances with unconverted men.

I SHOULD not recommend a young minister to pay much deference to the Scotch Divines. The Erskines, who were the best of them, are dry, and laboured, and prolix, and wearisome. He may find incomparable matter in them, but he should beware of forming his taste and manner after their model. I want a more kind hearted and liberal sort of divinity. He had much better take up Bishop Hall. There is a set of excellent, but wrong-headed men, who would reform the London preachers on a more elaborate plan. They are not philosophers who talk thus. If Owen himself were to rise from the grave, unless it were for the influence of the great name which he would

bring with him, he might close his days with a small congregation, in some little meeting-house.

SHAKSPEARE had a low and licentious taste. When he chose to imagine a virtuous and exalted character, he would completely throw his mind into it, and give the perfect picture of such a character. But he is at home in Falstaff. No high, grand, virtuous, religious aim beams forth in him. A man, whose heart and taste are modelled on the Bible, nauseates him in the mass, while he is enraptured and astonished by the flashes of his pre-eminent genius.

"HAVE you read my Key to the Romans?"—said Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, to Mr. Newton. "I have turned it over."—"You have turned it over! And is this the treatment a book must meet with, which has cost me many years of hard study? Must I be told, at last, that you have 'turned it over,' and then thrown it aside? You ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what comes forward on so serious a subject."—"Hold! you have cut me out full employment, if my life were to be as long as Methuselah's. I have somewhat else to do in the short day allotted me, than to read whatever any one may think it his duty to write.

When I read, I wish to read to good purpose; and there are some books, which contradict on the very face of them what appear to me to be first principles. You surely will not say I am bound to read such books. If a man tells me he has a very elaborate argument to prove that two and two make five, I have something else to do than to attend to this argument. If I find the first mouthful of meat which I take from a fine looking joint on my table is tainted, I need not eat through it, to be convinced I ought to send it away."

I NEVER read any sermons so much like Whitefield's manner of preaching as Latimer's. You see a simple mind uttering all its feelings; and putting forth every thing as it comes, without any reference to books or men, with a *naiveté* seldom equalled.

I ADMIRED Witsius's "Economy of the Covenants," but not so much as many persons. There is too much system. I used to study commentators and systems; but I am come almost wholly, at length, to the Bible. Commentators are excellent in general, where there are but few difficulties: but they leave the harder knot still untied. I find in the Bible, the more I read, a grand peculiarity, that seems to say to all who attempt to systematize it, "I am not of your kind. I am not amenable to your methods of thinking. I

am untractable in your hands. I stand alone. The great and wise shall never exhaust my treasures. By figures and parables I will come down to the feelings and understandings of the ignorant. Leave me as I am, but study me incessantly." Calvin's Institutes are, to be sure, great and admirable, and so are his commentaries; but after all, if we must have commentators—as we certainly must—Poole is incomparable, and I have almost said abundant of himself.

YOUNG is, of all other men, one of the most striking examples of the disunion of piety from truth. If we read his most true, impassioned, and impressive estimate of the world and of religion, we shall think it impossible that he was uninfluenced by his subject. It is, however, a melancholy fact, that he was hunting after preferment at eighty years old; and felt and spoke like a disappointed man. The truth was pictured on his mind in most vivid colours. He felt it while he was writing. He felt himself on a retired spot: and he saw death, the mighty hunter, pursuing the unthinking world. He saw redemption—its necessity and its grandeur; and while he looked on it, he spoke as a man would speak whose mind and heart are deeply engaged. Notwithstanding all this, the view did not reach his heart. Had I preached in

his pulpit with the fervour and interest that his "Night Thoughts" discover, he would have been terrified. He told a friend of mine who went to him under religious fears, that he must go more into the world!"

ON THE SCRIPTURES.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON THE SCRIPTURES.

I AM an entire disciple of Butler. He calls his book "Analogy;" but the great subject, from beginning to end, is human ignorance. Berkeley has done much to reduce man to a right view of his attainments in real knowledge; but he goes too far. He requires a demonstration of self-evident truths: he requires me to demonstrate that that table is before me. Beattie has well replied to this error, in his "Immutability of Truth;" though it pleased Mr. Hume to call that book "Philosophy for the Ladies."

Metaphysicians seem born to puzzle and confound mankind. I am surprised to hear men talk of their having demonstrated such and such points. Even Andrew Baxter, one of the best of these metaphysicians, though he reasons and speculates well, has not de-

monstrated to my mind one single point by his reasonings. They know nothing at all on the subject of moral and religious truth, beyond what God has revealed. I am so deeply convinced of this, that I can sit by and smile at the fancies of these men; and especially when they fancy they have found out demonstrations. Why, there are demonstrators, who will carry the world before them, till another man rises, who demonstrates the very opposite, and then, of course, the world follows him!

We are mere mites creeping on the earth, and oftentimes conceited mites too. If any superior being will condescend to visit us and teach us, something may be known. "Has God spoken to man?" This is the most important question that can be asked. All ministers should examine this matter to the foundation. Many are culpably negligent herein. But when this has been done, let there be no more questionings and surmises. My son is not, perhaps, convinced that I am entitled to be his teacher. Let us try. If he finds that he knows more than I do, well: if he finds that he knows nothing and submits, I am not to renew this conviction in his mind every time he chooses to require me to do so.

If any honest and benevolent man felt scruples in his breast concerning revelation,

he would hide them there; and would not move wretched men from the only support which they can have in this world. I am thoroughly convinced of the want of real integrity and benevolence in all infidels. And I am as thoroughly convinced of the want of real belief of the Scriptures in most of those who profess to believe them.

Metaphysicians can unsettle things, but they can erect nothing. They can pull down a church, but they cannot build a hovel. The Hutchinsonians have said the best things about the metaphysicians. I am no Hutchinsonian; yet I see that they have data, and that there is something worth proving in what they assert.

PRINCIPLE is to be distinguished from prejudice. The man who should endeavour to weaken my belief of the truth of the Bible, and of the fair deduction from it of the leading doctrines of religion, under the notion of their being prejudices, should be regarded by me as an assassin. He stabs me in my dearest hopes; he robs me of my solid happiness; and he has no equivalent to offer. This species of evidence of the truth and value of Scripture is within the reach of all men. It is my strongest. It assures me as fully as a voice could from heaven, that my principles are not prejudices. I see in the Bible my

heart and the world painted to the life; and I see just that provision made, which is competent to the highest ends and effects on this heart and this world.

THE Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers, some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it, which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners, is the grand truth presented everywhere, and in all points of light; but "the pure in heart" sees a thousand traits of the divine character, of himself, and of the world—some striking and bold, others cast as it were into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined—some direct, others by way of intimation or inference.

HE, who reads the Scripture, only in the translation, is meanly prepared as a public teacher. The habit of reading the Scriptures in the original, throws a new light and sense over numberless passages. The original has, indeed, been obtruded so frequently, and sometimes so absurdly, on the hearers, that their confidence in the translation has been shaken. The judicious line of conduct herein, is—To think with the wise, and talk with the vulgar—to attain, as far as possible and by

all means, the true sense and force of every passage; and, wherever that differs from the received translation, work it in imperceptibly, that the hearers may be instructed while they receive no prejudice against that form in which they enjoy the Scriptures.

No man will preach the gospel so freely as the Scriptures preach it, unless he will submit to talk like an Antinomian, in the estimation of a great body of Christians; nor will any man preach it so practically as the Scriptures, unless he will submit to be called, by as large a body, an Arminian. Many think that they find a middle path: which is, in fact, neither one thing nor another; since it is not the incomprehensible, but grand plan of the Bible. It is somewhat of human contrivance. It savours of human poverty and littleness.

WERE the Scriptures required to supply a direct answer to every question which even a sincere enquirer might ask, it would be impracticable. They form, even now, a large volume. The method of instruction adopted in them is, therefore, this:—The rule is given: the doctrine is stated: examples are brought forward—cases in point, which illustrate the rule and the doctrine: and this is found sufficient for every upright and humble mind.

THE simple and unprejudiced study of the Bible is the death of religious extravagance. Many read it under a particular bias of the mind. They read books, written by others, under the same views. Their preaching and conversation run in the same channel. If they could awaken themselves from this state, and come to read the whole Scripture for everything which they could find there, they would start as from a dream, amazed at the humble, meek, forbearing, holy, heavenly character of the simple religion of the Scriptures, to which, in a greater or less degree, their eyes had been blinded.

THE right way of interpreting Scripture, is, to take it as we find it, without any attempt to force it into any particular system. Whatever may be fairly inferred from Scripture, we need not fear to insist on. Many passages speak the language of what is called Calvinism, and that in almost the strongest terms. I would not have a man clip and curtail these passages, to bring them down to some system. Let him go with them in their free and full sense; for otherwise, if he do not absolutely pervert them, he will attenuate their energy. But, let him look at as many more, which speak the language of Arminianism, and let him go all the way with these also. God has been pleased thus to state and

to leave the thing; and all our attempts to distort it, one way or the other, are puny and contemptible.

A MAN may find much amusement in the Bible, variety of prudential instruction, abundance of sublimity and poetry; but, if he stops there, he stops short of its great end; for, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The grand secret in the study of the Scriptures, is, to discover Jesus Christ therein, "the way, the truth, and the life."

IN reading the Scriptures, we are apt to think God further removed from us, than from the persons to whom he spake therein. The knowledge of God will rectify this error; as if God *could be* further from us than from them. In reading the Old Testament especially, we are apt to think that the things spoken there, in the prophet Hosea, for instance, have little relation to us. The knowledge taught by Christian experience will rectify this error; as if religion were not always the same sort of transaction between God and the soul.

THERE are two different ways of treating the truths of the gospel, the scientific and the simple. It was seriously given me in charge, when I first entered into the ministry, by a female who attended my church, that I should study Baxter's "Catholic Theology."

I did so; but the best idea that I acquired from this labour was, that the most sagacious and subtle men can make out little beyond the plain, obvious, and broad statement of truth in the Scriptures. I should think it a very proper and suitable punishment for a conceited and pragmatical dogmatist, to oblige him to digest that book. Another great truth, indeed, we may gather from it; and that is, that the intemperate men, on either side, are very little aware of the consequences, which may be legitimately drawn from their principles. Even Dr. Owen has erred. I would not compare him in this respect, with Baxter; for he has handled his points with far greater wisdom and simplicity; yet he errs *ex abundanti*. He attempts to make out things with more accuracy, and clearness, and system, than the Bible will warrant. The Bible scorns to be treated scientifically. After all your accurate statements, it will leave you aground. The Bible does not come round, and ask our opinion of its contents. It proposes to us a constitution of grace, which we are to receive, though we do not wholly comprehend it. Numberless questions may be started on the various parts of this constitution. Much of it I cannot understand, even of what respects myself; but I am called to act on it. And this is agreeable to analogy. My child will ask me questions on the fitness

or unfitness of what I enjoin; but I silence him. "You are not yet able to comprehend this; your business is, to believe me and obey me." But the schoolmen will not be satisfied with this view of things; yet they can make nothing out satisfactorily. They have their *de re*, and their *de nomine;* but nothing is gained by these attempts at clearness and nice distinctions. These very accurate men, who think they adjust everything with precision, cannot agree among themselves, and do little else than puzzle plainer minds.

WHATEVER definitions men have given of religion, I can find none so accurately descriptive of it as this—that it is such a belief of the Bible as maintains a living influence on the heart. Men may speculate, criticise, admire, dispute about, doubt, or believe the Bible; but the religious man is such because he so believes it, as to carry habitually a practical sense of its truths on his mind.

THE fears of the general class of Christians are concerned about the superstructure of religion; but those of speculative minds chiefly relate to the foundation. The less thinking man doubts whether he is on the foundation: he whose mind is of a more intellectual turn doubts concerning the foundation itself. I have met with many of these speculative cases. Attacks of this nature are

generally sudden. A suspicion will, by surprise, damp the heart; and, for a time, will paint the Bible as a fable. I have found it useful on such occasions to glance over the whole thread of Scripture. The whole, presented in such a view, brings back the mind to its proper tone: the indelible characters of simplicity and truth impress with irresistible effect that heart, which can discern them as having once felt them.

ON THE OLD AND NEW DISPENSATIONS.

THE Old and New Testaments contain but one scheme of religion. Neither part of this scheme can be understood without the other; and, therefore, great errors have arisen from separating them. They are like the rolls on which they were anciently written, before books of the present form were invented. It is but one subject and one system, from beginning to end; but the view which we obtain of it grows clearer and clearer, as we unwind the roll that contains it.

THERE is one grand and striking feature of distinction between the spirit of the Old Testament dispensation and that of the New. The old dispensation was a dispensation of limits, waymarks, forms and fashions; every-

thing was weighed and measured. If a man did but gather sticks on the Sabbath, he was to be stoned without mercy; if a Jew brought an offering, it was of no avail if not presented at the door of the tabernacle. The manner, the time, the circumstances were all minutely instituted; and no devotion or piety of spirit could exempt a man from the yoke of all these observances, for God had appointed these as the way in which he chose that a devout Jew should express his state of mind.

But the new dispensation changed the whole system. Religion was now to become more peculiarly a spiritual transaction between God and the soul; and independent, in a higher measure than ever before, of all positive institutions. Its few, simple institutions had no further object, than the preservation of the unity, order, soundness, and purity of the church—in regard to doctrine, government, and discipline.

Nor had these appointments that character of unaccommodating inflexibility, which marked the institutions of the old dispensation. All nations, men of all habits and manners, are to drink life from the beneficent stream as it flows. It is to throw down no obstructions that are not absolutely incompatible with its progress. But it is appointed to pervade every place which it visits. Some it enters without obstruction, and passes di-

rectly through. In some, it meets with mounds and obstacles; yet rises till it finds an entrance. Others are so fenced and fortified, that it winds round them and flows forward, continuing to do so, till it, at length, finds some method of insinuating itself.

And thus the dispensation of grace in the church accommodates itself to the various tempers and habits which it finds in different ages, nations, and bodies of men. It leaves in existence numberless opinions and prejudices, if they are not inconsistent with its main design, and mingles and insinuates itself among them. It has not limited Christianity to any one form of church polity, ordained and perfected in all its parts by divine authority; but Christians are left to act herein according to circumstances, and to the exercise of sound discretion under those circumstances.

ON TYPICAL AND ALLEGORICAL EXPLANATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

It might be expected that, when God had determined to send his Son into the world, there would be a train and concatenation of circumstances preparatory to his coming—that the history, which declared that he was to come, should exhibit many persons and

things, which would form a grand preparation for the event, though not so many as an absurd fancy might imagine.

There is a certain class of persons who wish to rid themselves of the types. Sykes insists that even the brazen serpent is called in by our Lord by way of illustration only, and not as a designed type. Robinson, of Cambridge, when he began to verge toward Socinianism, began to ridicule the types, and to find matter of sport in the pomegranates and the bells of the high priest's garment. At all events, the subject should not be treated with levity and irreverence: it deserves serious reflection.

With respect to the expediency of employing the types much in the pulpit, that is another question. I seldom employ them. I am jealous for truth and its sanctions. The old dispensation was a typical dispensation; but the new is a dispensation unrolled. When speaking of the typical dispensation, we must admire a master like Paul. But to us, modesty becomes a duty in treating such subjects in our ministry. Remember, "This is none other but the house of God! and this is the gate of heaven!" How dreadful if I lead thousands with nonsense! if I lose the opportunity of impressing solid truths! if I waste their precious time!

A minister should say to himself: "I would

labour to cut off occasions of objecting to the truth. I would labour to grapple with men's consciences. I would show them that there is no strange twist in our view of religion. I must avoid, as much as possible, having my judgment called in question: many watch for this, and will avail themselves of any advantage. Some who hear me, are thus continually seeking excuses for not listening to the warnings and invitations of the word: they are endeavouring to get out of our reach; but I would hold them fast by such passages as, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul!"

Many men labour to make the Bible *their* Bible. This is one way of getting its yoke off their necks. The meaning, however, of the Bible is the Bible. If I preach then on imputed righteousness, for instance, why should I preach from, "the skies pour down righteousness," and then anathematize men for not believing the doctrine, when it is not declared in the passage, and there are hundreds of places so expressly to the point?

Most of the folly on this subject of allegorical interpretation, has arisen from a want of holy awe on the mind. An evil fashion may lead some men into it; and, so far, the case is somewhat extenuated. We should ever remember, however, that it is a very different thing to allegorize the new dispen-

sation from allegorizing the old: the new is a dispensation of substance and realities.

When a careless young man, I remember to have felt alarms in my conscience from some preachers; while others, from this method of treating their subjects, let me off easily. I heard the man as a weak allegorizer; I despised him as a foolish preacher; till I met with some plain, simple, solid man, who seized and urged the obvious meaning. I shall, therefore, carry to my grave a deep conviction of the danger of entering far into typical and allegorical interpretations.

Accommodation of Scripture, if sober, will give variety. The apostles do this so far as to show that it may have its use and advantage. It should, however, never be taken as a ground-work, but employed only in the way of allusion. I may use the passage, "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," by way of allusion to Christ; but I cannot employ it as the ground-work of a discourse on him.

ON THE DIVERSITY OF CHARACTER IN CHRISTIANS, AND ON CORRECTING THE DEFECTS IN OUR CHARACTER.

In discovering and counteracting the defects of our own character, it is of chief importance that we really intend to ascertain the truth.

The intention is extremely defective in us all. The man who thinks he has such honest intention, yet has it very imperfectly. He says, "Touch me; but touch me like a gentleman. Do not intrude on the delicacies of society." The real meaning of which is, that he has no intention of hearing the truth from you. A man, who has a wound to be healed, comes to the surgeon with such an intention to get it healed, that if he suspected his skill or his fidelity he would seek another.

Intention, or a man's really desiring to know the truth concerning himself, would produce attention. He would soon find, that there is little close business in a man, who does not withdraw from the world.

He will begin with self-suspicion. "Perhaps I am such or such a man. I see defects in all my friends, and I must be a madman not to suppose that I also have mine. I see defects in my friends, which they not only do not themselves see, but they will not suffer others to show these defects to them. I must, therefore, take it for granted that I am a more foolish and pragmatical fellow than I can conceive."

If he begin thus, then he will be willing to proceed a step further. "Let me try if I cannot reach these defects." I have found out myself by seeing my picture in another man. I would choose men of my own consti-

tution; other men would give me no proper picture of myself. In such men, I can see actions to be ridiculous or absurd, when I could not have seen them to be so in myself. We may learn some features of our portrait from enemies; an enemy gives a hard feature probably, but it is often a truer likeness than can be obtained from a friend. What with your friend's tenderness for you, and your own tenderness for yourself, you cannot get at the true feature. We should, moreover, encourage our friends. You cannot, in one case in ten, go to a man on a business of this nature, without offending him. He will allege such and such excuses for the defect, and fritter it away to nothing. This shows the hypocrisy, the falsehood, the self-love, and the flattery of the heart. This endeavour to conceal or palliate defects, instead of a desire to discover them, grows up with us from infancy. There is something so deceitful in sin, a man is brought to believe his own lie! He is so accustomed to hide himself from himself, that he is surprised when another detects and unmasks him. Hazael verily believed himself incapable of becoming what the prophet foretold.

Many motives urge us to attempt a rectification of our defects. Consider the importance of character; he who says he cares not what men think of him, is on a very low

form in the school of experience and wisdom. Character and money effect almost everything. It should be considered, too, how much we have smarted for want of attending to our defects; nineteen out of twenty of our smarting times, arise from this cause.

In counteracting our defects, however, we should be cautious not to blunder by imitation of others. There are such men in the world as saint-errants. One of these men takes up the history of Ignatius Loyola; and nothing seems worthy of his endeavour, but to be just such a man in all the extravagancies of his character and conduct. We should search till we find where our character fails, and then amend it; not attempt to become another man.

A wise man, who is seriously concerned to learn the truth respecting himself, will not spurn it even from a fool. The great men who kept fools in their retinue, learnt more truth from them than from their companions. A real self-observer will ask whether there is any truth in what the fool says of him. Nay, a truth, that may be uttered in envy or anger, will not lose its weight with him. The man, who is determined to find happiness, must bear to have it even beaten into him. No man ever found it by chance, or "yawned it into being with a wish." When I was young, my mother had a servant whose conduct I

thought truly wise. A man was hired to brew; and this servant was to watch his method, in order to learn his art. In the course of the process, something was done which she did not understand. She asked him, and he abused her with the vilest epithets for her ignorance and stupidity. My mother asked her, when she related it, how she bore such abuse. "I would be called," said she, "worse names a thousand times for the sake of the information which I got out of him."

If a man would seriously set himself to this work, he must retire from the crowd. He must not live in a bustle. If he is always driving through the business of the day, he will be so in harness as not to observe the road he is going.

He must place perfect standards before his eyes. Every man has his favourite notions; and, therefore, no man is a proper standard. The perfect standard is only to be found in Scripture. Elijah meets Ahab, and holds up the perfect standard before his eyes, till he shrinks into himself. 1 Kings xviii. 17. I have found great benefit in being sickened and disgusted with the false standards of men. I turn, with stronger convictions, to the perfect standard of God's word.

He should also commune with his own heart upon his bed—"how did I fall, at such or

such a time, into my peculiar humours! Had any other man done so, I should have lost my patience with him."

Above all, he must make his defects matter of constant prayer. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

MEN are to be estimated, as Johnson says, by the mass of character. A block of tin may have a grain of silver, but still it is tin; and a block of silver may have an alloy of tin, but still it is silver. The mass of Elijah's character was excellence; yet he was not without alloy. The mass of Jehu's character was base; yet he had a portion of zeal which was directed by God to great ends. Bad men are made the same use of as scaffolds: they are employed as means to erect a building, and then are taken down and destroyed.

WE must make great allowance for constitution. I could name a man, who, though a good man, is more unguarded in his tongue than many immoral persons: shall I condemn him? He breaks down here, and almost here only. On the other hand, many are so mild and gentle, as to make one wonder how such a character could be formed without true grace entering into its composition.

GOD has given to every man a peculiar

constitution. No man is to say, "I am such or such a man, and I can be no other; such or such is my way, and I am what God made me." This is true, in a sound sense: but in an unsound sense, it has led men foolishly and wickedly to charge their eccentricities and even their crimes upon God. It is every man's duty to understand his own constitution; and to apply to it the rein or the spur, as it may need. All men cannot do, nor ought they to do, all things in the same way, nor even the same things. But there are common points of duty, on which all men of all habits are to meet. The free horse is to be checked, perhaps, up-hill, and the sluggish one to be urged; but the same spirit, which would have exhausted itself before, shows itself probably in resistance down-hill, when he feels the breeching press upon him behind; but he must be whipped out of his resistance.

THERE is a large class of Christians, who want discrimination in religion. They are sound and excellent men, but they are not men of deep experience. They are not men of Owen's, Gilpin's, Rutherford's, Adams's, or Brainerd's school. They have a general, but not a minute acquaintance, with the combat between sin and grace in the heart. I have learnt not to bring deeply experimental subjects before such persons. They cannot understand them, but are likely to be dis-

tressed by them. This difference between persons of genuine piety arises from constitution—or from the manner in which the grace of God first met them—or from the nature and degree of temptation through which God has led them. A mind finely constituted, or of strong passions, a mind roused in its sins, rather than one drawn insensibly, a mind trained in a severe school for high services, is generally the subject of this deeply interior acquaintance with religion.

THERE is a great diversity of character among real Christians. Education, constitution, and circumstances will fully explain this diversity.

He has seen but little of life, who does not discern everywhere the effects of education on men's opinions and habits of thinking. Two children bring out of the nursery that, which displays itself throughout their lives. And who is the man that can rise above his dispensation, and can say, "You have been teaching me nonsense?"

As to constitution, look at Martin Luther: we may see the man every day; his eyes, and nose, and mouth attest his character. Look at Melancthon; he is like a snail with his couple of horns; he puts out his horns and feels—and feels—and feels. No education could have rendered these two men alike.

Their difference began in the womb. Luther dashes in saying his things: Melancthon must go round about. He must consider what the Greek says, and what the Syriac says. Some men are born minute men, lexicographers, of a German character: they will hunt through libraries to rectify a syllable. Other men are born keen as a razor. They have a sharp, severe, strong acumen; they cut everything to pieces; their minds are like a case of instruments; touch which you will, it wounds; they crucify a modest man. Such men should aim at a right knowledge of character. If they attained this, they would find out the sin that easily besets them. The greater the capacity of such men, the greater their cruelty. They ought to blunt their instruments. They ought to keep them in a case. Other men are ambitious, fond of power; pride and power give a velocity to their motions. Others are born with a quiet, retiring mind. Some are naturally fierce, and others naturally mild and placable. Men often take to themselves great credit for what they owe entirely to nature. If we would judge rightly, we should see that narrowness or expansion of mind, niggardliness or generosity, delicacy or boldness, have less of merit or demerit than we commonly assign to them.

Circumstances, also, are not sufficiently

taken into the account, when we estimate character. For example, we generally censure the reformers and puritans as dogmatical, morose, systematic men. But, it is easier to walk on a road, than to form that road. "Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours." In a fine day I can walk abroad; but, in a rough and stormy day, I should find it another thing to turn coachman and dare all weathers. These men had to bear the burden and heat of the day: they had to fight against hard times: they had to stand up against learning and power. Their times were not like ours. A man may now think what he will, and nobody cares what he thinks. A man of that school was, of course, stiff, rigid, unyielding. Tuckney was such a man. Whichcot was for smoothing things, and walking abroad. We see circumstances operating in many other ways. A minister unmarried, and the same man married, are very different men. A minister in a small parish, and the same man in a large sphere where his sides are spurred and goaded, are very different men. A minister on tenter hooks, harassed, schooled, and the same man nursed, cherished, put into a hot-house, are very different men. Some of us are hot-house plants. We grow tall; not better, not stronger. Talents are among the circumstances which form the diversity of character.

A man of talents feels his own powers, and throws himself into that line which he can pursue with most success. Saurin felt that he could flourish, lighten, thunder, enchant, like a magician. Every one should seriously consider, how far his talents and turn of mind and circumstances drive him out of the right road. It is an easy thing for a man of vigour to bring a quiet one before his bar; and it is easy for this quiet man to condemn the other; yet both may be really pious men, serving God with their best powers. "Every man has his peculiar gift of God; one after this manner, and the other after that."

ON THE FALLEN NATURE OF MAN.

I SEEM to acquire little new knowledge on any subject, compared to that which I acquire concerning man. This subject is inexhaustible. I have lately read Colquhoun's Treatise on the "Police of the Metropolis," and Barruell's "Memoirs of Jacobinism." When we preachers draw pictures of human nature in the pulpit, we are told that we calumniate it. Calumniate it! Let such censurers read these writers, and confess that we are novices in painting the vices of the heart. All of us live to make discoveries of the evils of the heart, not of its virtues. All our new know-

ledge of human nature is occupied with its evils.

Bartholomew fair is one of the most perfect exhibitions of unrestrained human nature in the whole world. The monkey, the tiger, the wolf, the hog, and the goat, are not only to be found in their own, but in human form; with all their savageness, brutality, and filthiness. It displays human nature in its most degraded, ridiculous and absurd conditions. The tiger may be seen in a quiescent state, if we pass through Dyot street; he couches there; he blinks. But, at Bartholomew fair, he is rampant, vigorous, fierce. Passing through a fair in a country town, I witnessed a most instructive scene. Two withered, weather-beaten wretches were standing at the door of a show-cart, and receiving two pences from sweet, innocent, ruddy country girls, who paid their money, and dropped their curtsies; while these wretches smiled at their simplicity, and clapped them on the back as they entered the door. What a picture this of Satan! He sets off his shows, and draws in heedless creatures, and takes from them everything they have good about them! There was a fellow dressed out as a zany, with a hump-back and a hump-belly, a lengthened nose, and a lengthened chin. To what a depth of degradation must human nature

be sunk, to seek such resources! I derived more instruction from this scene, than I could have done from many elaborate theological treatises.

VIEW man on whatever side we can, in his sensualities, or in his ferocities; in the sins of his flesh, or in the sins of his spirit; catch him when and where you will, his condition is deplorable. While he is sunk in the mass himself, he has no perception of his state; but when he begins to emerge, he looks down with amazement. He sees but little, however, of its abomination; because he has still an affinity with the evil.

HUMAN nature is like the sea, which gains by the flow of the tide in one place, what it has lost by the ebb in another. A man may acquiesce in the method which God takes to mortify his pride; but he is in danger of growing proud of the mortification; and so in other cases.

ON THE NEED OF GRACE.

THERE is something so remarkable in the genius and spirit of the gospel, that it is not to be understood by any force of speculation and investigation. Baxter attempted this method, and found it vain. The state of the

heart has the chief influence, in the search after truth. Humility, contrition, simplicity, sanctity—these are the handmaids of the understanding in the investigation of religion.

How is it that some men labour in divine things night and day, but labour in vain? How is it that men can turn over the Bible from end to end to support errors and heresies, absurdities and blasphemies? They take not the spirit with the word. A spiritual understanding must be given, a gracious perception, a right taste.

"A VERY extraordinary thing," said one, "if I, who have read the Bible over and over in the original languages, have studied it day and night, and have written criticisms and comments on it—a very extraordinary thing, that I should not be able to discover that meaning in the Scriptures, which is said to be so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err in discovering it!" And so it is extraordinary till we open this Bible; and there we see the fact explained. The man who approaches the word of God in his own wisdom, shall not find what the fool shall discover under the teaching of divine wisdom: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent"—and "God

hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

GOD, in his providence, seems to make little account of the measures and contrivances of men, in accomplishing his designs. He will do the work, and his hand will be seen in the doing of it. We are obliged to wait for the tide. When that flows, and the wind sets in fair, let us hoist the sails. When the tide has left a ship on the beach, an army may attempt to move it in vain; but when she is floated by the water, a small force moves her. We must wait for openings in Providence. In this light I view the darkness of the heathen world. Let us follow every apparent leading of Providence, in our endeavours to communicate light to the heathen; but, still, the opening and the whole work must be of God. Thousands, indeed, hear the gospel, who are no more impressed by it than though they were heathens. The minds of some men will stand, as it were, a regular blockade, and yet yield to a side blow; sit unchanged under a searching ministry, and yet fall beneath a casual word. I know such cases. We might account, indeed, for them, in some measure, as philosophers. The mind, which plants itself against and repels the formal and avowed attacks of the preacher, may be surprised by a hint ad-

dressed, perhaps, to another; yet, after all, the whole work is of God. We may make very little, therefore, of the vehicle. The gospel, the wants of men, the indisposition of the heart, and the mighty power of God, are always and universally the same. By whatever vehicle God conveys that mighty energy, which disposes man to find the relief of his wants in the gospel, He is still the worker. It is a divine operation of God's Holy Spirit. If God would raise up heathen princes with the spirit of Peter the Great or Kouli Khan, and send them forth under the powerful influence of Christianity to proselyte their subjects, we might expect the end to be accomplished; but this is a scheme suited to our littleness, and not to Him, "whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, and whose ways are not as our ways."

A LADY proposed to me a case, which seemed to her to decide against those views of religion called evangelical. She knew a most amiable girl who was respectful and attentive to her parents, and engaging and lovely to all connected with her, who had, however, no objection to seeing a play, and had certainly nothing of that which she knew I should call religion; but she asked if I could believe that God would condemn such a character to everlasting misery. Many

persons view things in this way. They set themselves up to dictate to God what should be done, on points which he only can determine. If these persons are ever cured of this evil, it must probably be in some such way as that by which it pleased God to teach Job. Job could assert his integrity and his character against the arguments of his friends; but, when God asked, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Job prostrates his soul with this declaration, "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

EVERY thinking man will look round him, when he reflects on his situation in this world; and will ask, "What will meet my case? What is it that I want? What will satisfy me? I look at the *rich*, and I see Ahab, in the midst of all his riches, sick at heart for a garden of herbs! I see Dives, after all his wealth, lifting up his eyes in hell, and begging for a drop of water to cool the rage of his sufferings! I see the rich fool summoned away, in the very moment when he was exulting in his hoards! If I look at the *wise*, I see Solomon, with all his wisdom, acting like a fool; and I know that, if I possessed all his wisdom, were I left to myself, I should act as he did. I see Ahithophel, with all his

policy, hanging himself for vexation! If I turn to men of *pleasure*, I see that the very sum of all pleasure is, that it is Satan's bed into which he casts his slaves! I see Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage! I see Solomon, after all his enjoyments, leaving his name a scandal to the church to the latest age! If I think of *honour*, take a walk in Westminster Abbey. There is an end of all inquiry. There I walk among the mighty dead! There is the winding up of human glory! And what remains of the greatest men of my country? A boasting epitaph! None of these things, then, can satisfy me! I must meet death, I must meet judgment, I must meet God, I must meet eternity!"

ON THE OCCASIONS OF ENMITY AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

THE *cause* of enmity against real Christianity is in the heart. The angel Gabriel might exhibit the truth, but the heart would rise in enmity. To suppose that there is any way of preaching the cross so as not to offend the world, is to know nothing of the subject.

There are many *occasions*, however, of calling forth this enmity. Any man, who should bleed me, would put me to pain; but

he would greatly aggravate my pain if he rudely tore my skin. Occasions may render the reception of that truth morally impossible, which, under the most favourable circumstances, is received with difficulty.

Ignorance, in ministers, is an occasion of exciting enmity against Christianity. A man may betray ignorance on almost every subject except the way of salvation. But if others see him to be a fool off his own ground, they will think him a fool on that ground. It is a great error to rail against human learning, so as to imply an undervaluing of knowledge. A man may have little of what is called learning, but he must have knowledge. Bunyan was such a man.

Religious profession was, at first, a conflict, a sacrifice; now it is become a trade. The world sees this spirit pervade many men; and it is a great occasion of enmity. Men of learning and character have confirmed this impression; they have brought out this mischief, and exhibited it to the world. Let any man look into Warburton's "Doctrine of Grace," and he may sit down and wonder that God should suffer such occasions of enmity to arise.

Fanatical times furnish another occasion; the days of Cromwell, for instance. The great enemy of godliness will never want instruments to make the best of such subjects

of ridicule. As long as such a book as Butler's Hudibras is in the world, it will supply occasions of enmity against real religion.

An unholy, insolent professor of religion occasions enmity. He scorns and insults mankind. His spirit is such as to give them occasion of contemning the truth which he professes. The world will allow some men to call it to account; they will feel a weight of character in a holy and just man.

Eccentricity, in religious men, is another occasion of enmity. Ask an eccentric man a question; he will stare in your face, and look very spiritual. I knew one of these men who called out to a farmer as he was passing, "Farmer! what do you know of Jesus Christ?" Much spiritual pride lurks under this conduct. There is want of breeding and good sense. The world is led to form wrong associations by such characters: "Religion makes a man a fool, or mad; therefore I will not become religious."

Injudicious preaching increases the offence of the cross. Strange interpretations of Scripture, ludicrous comparisons, silly stories, talking without thinking; these are occasions of enmity.

The loose and indiscreet conduct of professing Christians, particularly of ministers, is another occasion. The world looks at min-

isters out of the pulpit, to know what they mean when in it.

An ostentatious spirit in a professor of religion does great injury—that giving out that he is some great one. Even a child will often detect this spirit, when we think no one discovers it.

The manner of conducting the devotional part of public service is sometimes offensive. It is as much as to say, "we mean nothing by this service.* Have patience, and you shall hear me."

Slighting the offence of irregularity has done much harm. It was a wise reply of a Spanish minister to his king: "Omit this affair; it is but a ceremony!" "A ceremony! Why the king is a ceremony!"

Good men have given occasion of offence by maintaining suspicious connections. There is a wide difference between my not harassing and exposing a doubtful character, and my endorsing and authenticating him.

Contempt of men's prejudices of education will offend. It was not thus with Paul: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

A want of the spirit of the cross in its professors increases the offence of the cross—that humility, patience, and love to souls,

* Exodus xii. 26.

which animated Christ when he offered himself on the cross for the sins of the world.

These are some of the stumbling-blocks in the way of the world. And "woe unto the world," says our Lord, "because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come, but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh!" Every man, who is zealous for the diffusion of true religion, should keep his eye on all occasions of offence, since religion, of itself and in its own native beauty, has to encounter the natural enmity of the degenerate heart.

ON RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

It is difficult to speak on the subject of religious retirement. I am fully persuaded that most religious tradesmen are deficient in this duty, those especially in this great city. I tell every one of them so with whom I am intimately acquainted, and they all contest the point with me.

Yet there are some considerations, which, in my own private judgment concerning the thing, lead me to think that the religion of a great city is to be viewed in an aspect of its own. I say not this to those men whom I see endangered by the spirit of such a place. Give them an inch and they will take an ell. But I learn from it to aim at possibilities, and not to bend the bow till it breaks.

I say everywhere and to all, "You must hold intercourse with God, or your soul will die. You must walk with God, or Satan will walk with you. You must 'grow in grace,' or you will lose it: and you cannot do this, but by appropriating to this object a due portion of your time, and diligently employing suitable means." But, having said this, I leave it. I cannot limit and define to such men the exact way in which they must apply these principles, but the principles themselves I insist on. What I ought to do myself under my circumstances, I know: and what I ought to do were I in trade, I seem now to know; but what I really should do were I in trade, I know not; and, because I know not, I am afraid, in telling another man precisely how he ought to apply this principle, that I should act hypocritically and pharisaically. Stated seasons of retirement ought to be appointed and religiously observed; but the time and the measure of this retirement must be left to a man's own judgment and conscience.

I am restrained from dogmatizing on the subject, by reflecting on the sort of religion which seems in fact to be best suited to human nature itself, and especially to human nature harassed, worried, loaded, and urged as it is in this great city.

But I am restrained also by another consideration. Difference of character seems to

stamp a holy variety on the operation of religious principle. Some men live in a spirit of prayer, who are scarcely able to fix themselves steadily to the solemn act of prayer. Our characters are so much our own, that if a man were to come into my family in order to form himself on my model, and to imitate me for a month, it might seriously injure him. I have a favourite walk of twenty steps in my study and chamber; that walk is my oratory; but, if another man were obliged to walk as he prayed, it is very probable he could not pray at all.

In defining the operation of religious principle, I am afraid of becoming an Albert Durer. Albert Durer gave rules for forming the perfect figure of a man. He marked and defined all the relations and proportions. Albert Durer's man became the model of perfection in every Academy in Europe: and now every Academy in Europe has abandoned it, because no such figure was ever found in nature. I am afraid of reducing the variety which, to a certain degree, may be of God's own forming, to my notion of perfection. "You must maintain and cultivate a spirit of devotion," I say to all; "but be ye judges, as conscientious men, of the particular means suited to your circumstances."

The spirit of devotion should be our great aim. We are, indeed, buried in sense, and

cannot possibly attain or improve this spirit, but by proper means; yet these means are to be adapted and varied to character and situation.

"I must walk with God. In some way or other, whatever be my character or profession, I must acquire the holy habit of connecting everything that passes in my house and affairs, with God. If sickness or health visit my family, my eye must see and my heart must acknowledge the hand of God therein. Whether my affairs move on smoothly or ruggedly, God must be acknowledged in them. If I go out of my house or come into it, I must go out and come in as under the eye of God. If I am occupied in business all day long, I must still have the glory of God in my view. If I have any affair to transact with another, I must pray that God would be with us in that affair, lest we should blunder, and injure and ruin each other."

This is the language of a real Christian. But instead of such a spirit as this among the great body of tradesmen professing themselves religious, what do we see but a driving, impetuous pursuit of the world!—and, in this pursuit, not seldom, mean, low, suspicious, yea, immoral practices!

Yet I once went to a friend for the express purpose of calling him out into the world. I said to him, "It is your duty to accept the

loan of ten thousand pounds, and to push yourself forward into an ampler sphere." But he was a rare character: and his case was rare. His employers had said, "We are ashamed you should remain so long a servant in our house, with the whole weight of affairs on you. We wish you to enter as a principal with us, and will advance you ten thousand pounds. It is the custom of the city; it is your due; we are dissatisfied to see you in your present sphere." I assured him that it appeared to me to be his duty to accede to the proposal, But I did not prevail. He said, "Sir, I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to get to heaven. I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to master the world. I have everything I wish. More would encumber me, increase my difficulties, and endanger me."

SOLITUDE shows us what we should be: society shows us what we are. Yet, in the theory, solitude shows us our true character better than society. A man in his closet will find nature putting herself forth in actings, which the presence of others would restrain him from bringing into real effect. She schemes and she wishes, here, without reserve. She is pure nature. An enlightened and vigilant self-observer is surprised and alarmed. He puts himself on his guard. He goes

forth armed into the world. But society shows him that nature is practically evil. The circumstances of the day as they arise carry him away. If he could abstract himself, and follow the actings of his own mind with an impartial eye, he could not believe himself to be the man who had entered into the world with such holy resolutions.

RECOLLECTION is the life of religion. The Christian wants to know no new thing, but to have his heart elevated more above the world by secluding himself from it as much as his duties will allow, that religion may effect this its great end, by bringing its sublime hopes and prospects into more steady action on the mind.

I know not how it is, that some Christians can make so little of recollection and retirement. I find the spirit of the world a strong assimilating principle. I find it hurrying my mind away in its vortex, and sinking me among the dregs and filth of carnal nature. Even my ministerial employments would degenerate into a mere following of my trade and crying of my wares. I am obliged to withdraw myself regularly, and to say to my heart, "What are you doing? Where are you!"

ON A SPIRITUAL MIND.

Dr. Owen says, if a man of a carnal mind is brought into a large company, he will have much to do; if into a company of Christians, he will feel little interest; if into a smaller company engaged in religious exercises, he will feel still less; but if taken into a closet and forced to meditate on God and eternity, this will be insupportable!

The spiritual man is born, as it were, into a new world. He has a new taste. He savours the things of the Spirit. He turns to God, as the needle to the pole.

This is a subject of which many can understand but little. They want spiritual taste. Nay, they account it enthusiasm. Bishop Horsley will go all the way with Christians into their principles; but he thinks the feelings and desires of a spiritual mind enthusiastical.

There are various *characteristics* of a spiritual mind.

Self loathing is a characteristic of such a mind. The axe is laid to the root of a vainglorious spirit.

It maintains, too, a walk and converse with God. Enoch walked with God. There is a transaction between God and the spiritual mind; if the man feels dead and heartless,

that is matter of complaint to God. He looks to God for wisdom for the day, for the hour, for the business in hand.

A spiritual mind refers its affairs to God. "Let God's will be obeyed by me in this affair. His way may differ from that which I should choose, but let it be so. 'Surely, I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.'"

A spiritual mind has something of the nature of the sensitive plant. "I shall smart if I touch this or that." There is a holy shrinking away from evil.

A spiritual mind enjoys, at times, the influx of a holy joy and satisfaction, which surprises even itself. When bereaved of creature comforts, it can sometimes find such a repose in Christ and his promises, that the man can say, "Well! it is enough: let God take from me what else he pleases!"

A spiritual mind is a mortified mind. The church of Rome talks much of mortification, but her mortification is not radical and spiritual. Simon Stylites will willingly mortify himself on his pillar, if he can bring people around him to pray to him to pray for them. But the spiritual mind must mortify itself in whatever would retard its ascent towards heaven; it must rise on the wings of faith, and hope, and love.

A spiritual mind is an ingenuous mind. There is a sort of hypocrisy in us all. We are not quite stripped of all disguise. One man wraps round him a covering of one kind, and another of another. They, who think they do not this, yet do it though they know it not.

Yet this spiritual mind is a sublime mind. It has a vast and extended view. It has seen the glory and beauty of Christ and cannot therefore admire the goodly buildings of the temple: as Christ, says Fenelon, had seen his Father's house, and could not therefore be taken with the glory of the earthly structure!

I would urge young persons, when they are staggered by the conversation of people of the world, to dwell on the characteristics of a spiritual mind. "If you cannot answer their arguments, yet mark their spirit: and mark what a contrary spirit that is which you are called to cultivate."

There are various *means* of maintaining and promoting a spiritual mind. Beware of saying concerning this or that evil, "Is it not a little one?" Much depends on mortifying the body. There are silent marches which the flesh will steal on us:—the temper is too apt to rise: the tongue will let itself loose: the imagination, if liberty is given to it, will hurry us away. Vain company will injure the mind: carnal professors of religion espe-

cially will lower its tone: we catch a contagion from such men. Misemployment of time is injurious to the mind. When reflecting, in illness, on my past years, I have looked back with self reproach on days spent in my study. I was wading through history, and poetry, and monthly journals; but I was in my study! Another man's trifling is notorious to all observers: but what am *I* doing?—Nothing, perhaps, that has a reference to the spiritual good of my congregation! I do not speak against a chastised attention to literature, but the abuse of it. Avoid all idleness: "exercise thyself unto godliness;" plan for God. Beware of temptation: the mind which has dwelt on sinful objects, will be in darkness for days. Associate with spiritually-minded men: the very sight of a good man, though he says nothing, will refresh the soul. Contemplate Christ: be much in retirement and prayer: study the honour and glory of your Master.

ON DECLENSION IN RELIGION.

A CHRISTIAN may decline far in religion, without being suspected. He may maintain appearances. Everything seems to others to go on well. He suspects himself; for it requires great labour to maintain appearances:

especially in a minister. Discerning hearers will, however, often detect such declensions. He talks over his old matters. He says his things, but in a cold and unfeeling manner. He is sound, indeed, in doctrine; perhaps more sound than before; for there is a great tendency to soundness of doctrine, when appearances are to be kept up in a declining state of the heart.

Where a man has real grace, it may be part of a dispensation toward him that he is suffered to decline. He walked carelessly. He was left to decline, that he might be brought to feel his need of vigilance. If he is indulging a besetting sin, it may please God to expose him, especially if he is a high-spirited man, that he may hang down his head as long as he lives. He acted thus toward David and Hezekiah. But this is pulling down in order to build up again.

The *causes* of a decline in religion should be remarked.

The world has always much to do in religious declension. A minister is tempted, perhaps, to sacrifice everything to a name. If any appetite is suffered to prevail, it will stupefy the mind. Religion is an abstract and elevated affair. "The way of life is above to the wise, to depart from hell beneath." Keeping on good terms with those who respect us, is a snare. A speculative turn of

mind is a snare: it leads to that "evil heart of unbelief, which departs from the living God." Vain confidence thinks himself in no danger: he knows the truth: he can dispute for the truth. "What should we fear?" Why, that we have no fear. Trifling with conscience is a snare: no man indulges himself in anything which his conscience tells him ought not to be done, but it will at length wear away his spirituality of mind.

The *symptoms* of a religious decline are many.

When a minister begins to depart from God, and to lose a spiritual mind, he becomes fond sometimes of genteel company, who can entertain him, and who know how to respect his character! This genteel spirit is suspicious: it is associated with pride and delicacy, and a love of ease: in short it is the spirit of the world. It is the reverse of condescending to mean things: it is the reverse of the spirit of our Master.

It is a symptom of decline, when a man will unnecessarily expose the imperfections of the religious world. "Such a man," he will say, "is fond of praying; but he is fond of money." This is the very opposite spirit to that of Paul, who speaks even weeping of those who mind earthly things.

A violent sectarian spirit is a sign of religious declension. Honest men stand firm for

the vitals of religion. If the mind were right, the circumstantials of religion would not be made matters of fierce contention. The spirit of Paul was of another kind. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth."

Aversion to reproof marks a state of religious decline. The man cannot bear to have his state depicted, even in the pulpit. He calls the preaching, which searches and detects him, Arminian and legal. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why should he quarrel with the truth? If that truth is delivered in its just proportions, his quarrel is with God!

Stupidity under chastisement proves a man to be under declension. He is not disposed to ask, "Wherefore dost thou contend with me?" He is kicking against the pricks. He is stricken, but has not grieved. He is "chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke."

Such a man, too, has often a high mind. He is unhumbled, boasting, stout-hearted. He is ready to censure every one but himself.

Unnecessary occupation is another evidence of declension. Some men are unavoidably much engaged in the world. To such men God will give especial grace, if they seek it; and they shall maintain a spirit of devotion even in the bustle and occupation of their affairs. But some men "will be rich," and therefore "fall into temptation and a snare;" they will have shops in different parts of the town. They say they do not feel this affect their religious state; but I cannot believe them. A man is declined from God before he enters on such schemes; a spiritual and devout man will generally find the business in which he is already engaged a sufficient snare.

In short, the symptoms may be this or that, but the disease is a dead palsy. "Ephraim! —he hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not."

ON A CHRISTIAN'S ASSOCIATING WITH IRRELIGIOUS PERSONS FOR THEIR GOOD.

CHRIST is an example to us of entering into mixed society. But our imitation of him herein must admit of restrictions. A feeble

man must avoid danger. If any one could go into society as Christ did, then let him go; let him attend marriage-feasts and Pharisees' houses.

Much depends on a Christian's observing his call, the openings which Providence may make before him. It is not enough to say that he frequents public company in order to retard the progress of evil.

But, when in company of people of the world, we should treat them kindly and tenderly, with feeling and compassion. They should be assisted, if they are inclined to receive assistance. But if a Christian falls into the society of a mere worldling, it must be like the meeting of two persons in a rain; they will part as soon as possible. If a man loves such company, it is an evil symptom.

It is a Christian's duty to maintain a kind intercourse, if practicable, with his relatives. And he must duly appreciate their state; if not religious, they cannot see and feel and taste his enjoyments; they accommodate themselves to him, and he accomodates himself to them. It is much a matter of accommodation on both sides.

Avoid disgusting such friends unnecessarily. A precise man, for instance, must be humoured. Your friends set down your religion, perhaps, as a case of humour.

Cultivate good sense. If your friends per-

ceive you weak in any part of your views and conduct, they will think you weak in your religion.

Avoid vain jangling. There is a disposition in such friends to avoid important and pinching truth. If you will converse with them on the subject of religion, they will often endeavour to draw you on to such points as predestination. They will ask you what you think of the salvation of infants and of the heathen. All this is meant to throw out the great question.

Seize favourable occasions—not only the "*mollia tempora fandi;*" but when public characters and public events furnish occasions of profitable reflection. Bring before your friends the extreme childishness of a sinful state. Treat worldly amusements as puerile things. People of the world are sick at heart of their very pleasures.

ON THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

It belongs to our very relation to God, to set apart a portion of our time for his service: but, as it might have been difficult for conscience to determine what that portion should be, God has prescribed it: and the ground of the observance remains the same, whether the remembrance of God's resting

from his work, or any other reason, be assigned as the more immediate cause.

The Jewish Sabbath was partly of political institution, and partly of moral obligation. So far as it was a political appointment, designed to preserve the Jews distinct from other nations, it is abrogated: so far as it was of moral obligation, it remains in force.

Our Lord evidently designed to relax the strictness of the observance. Christianity is not a hedge placed round a peculiar people. A slave might enter into the spirit of Christianity, though obliged to work as a slave on the Sabbath: he might be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," though in the mines of Patmos.

Difficulties often arise in respect to the observance of the Sabbath. I tell conscientious persons, "If you have the spirit of Christianity, and are in an employment contrary to Christianity, you will labour to escape from it, and God will open your way." If such a man's heart be right, he will not throw himself out of his employment the first day he suspects himself to be wrong, but he will pray and wait till his way shall be opened before him.

Christ came not to abolish the Sabbath, but to explain and enforce it, as he did the rest of the law. Its observance was nowhere positively enjoined by him, because Christ-

ianity was to be practicable, and was to go into all nations: and it goes thither stripped of its precise and various circumstances. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," seems to be the soul of the Christian Sabbath.

In this view of the day, a thousand frivolous questions concerning its observance would be answered. "What can I do?" says one: I answer, "Do what true servants of God will do. Bend not to what is wrong. Be in the spirit. God will help you."

In short, we are going to spend a Sabbath in eternity. The Christian will acquire as much of the Sabbath spirit as he can. And in proportion to a man's real piety in every age of the church, he will be found to have been a diligent observer of the Sabbath day.

ON JUDGING JUSTLY.

A PERFECTLY just and sound mind is a rare and invaluable gift. But it is still much more unusual to see such a mind unbiassed in all its actings. God has given this soundness of mind but to few; and a very small number of those few escape the bias of some predilection, perhaps habitually operating; and none are at all times and perfectly free. I once saw this subject forcibly illustrated. A watchmaker told me that a gentleman had

put an exquisite watch into his hands, that went irregularly. It was as perfect a piece of work as was ever made. He took it to pieces and put it together again twenty times. No manner of defect was to be discovered, and yet the watch went intolerably. At last it struck him that, possibly, the balance-wheel might have been near a magnet. On applying a needle to it, he found his suspicions true. Here was all the mischief. The steel work in the other parts of the watch had a perpetual influence on its motions; and the watch went as well as possible with a new wheel. If the soundest mind be magnetized by any predilection, it must act irregularly.

Prejudice is often the result of such strong associations, that it acts involuntarily, in spite of conviction and resolution. The first step toward its eradication, is the persevering habit of presenting it to the mind in its true colours.

If a man will look at most of his prejudices, he will find that they arise from his field of view being necessarily narrow, like the eye of the fly. He can have but little better notions of the whole scheme of things, as has been well said, than a fly on the pavement of St. Paul's cathedral can have of the whole structure. He is offended, therefore, by inequalities which are lost in the grand design. This

persuasion will fortify him against many injurious and troublesome prejudices.

JUST judgment depends on the simplicity and the strength of the mind. The eye which conveys a perfect idea of the scene to the mind, must be unclouded and strong. If the mental eye be not single, the judgment will be warped by some little, mean and selfish interests; and, if it be not capable of a wide and distant range, the decision will be partial and imperfect. For example: a man, with either of these failings, will be likely to blind his eyes from the conviction, that would dart on him, when he places a son or a friend in any sphere of influence, because he is his son or his friend; when a single or a strong eye would show him that the interests of religion and truth required him to prefer some other person. The mind must be raised above the petty interests and affairs of life, and pursue supremely the glory of God and the church.

SOME minds are so diseased, that they can see an affair only in that light in which passion or predilection first presented it, or as it appears on the surface. The essence, the truth of the thing, which must give character to the whole, and on which all just decision must depend, may lie beneath the surface, and may be a nice affair. But such minds

cannot enter into it. It is as though I should try to convince such persons—allowing me that the pineal gland is the seat of the soul—that, however fair and perfect the form, the man wanted the essence of his being, in wanting that apparently insignificant part of his body. Such men would say, "Here is a striking and perfect form; all parts are harmonious; life animates the frame; the machine plays admirably; what has this little insignificant member to do with it?" And yet this is the essential and characterizing part of the man.

EVERY man has a peculiar turn of mind, which gives a colouring and tinge to his thoughts. I have particularly detected this in myself with respect to public affairs. I have such an immediate view of God acting in them, that all the great men, who make such a noise and bustle on the scene, seem to me like so many mere puppets. God is moving them all, to effect his own designs. They cannot advance a step, whither he does not lead: nor stand a moment where he does not place them. Now this is a view of things which it is my privilege to take as a Christian. But the evil lies here. I dwell so much on the view of the matter, to which the turn of my mind leads me, that I forget sometimes the natural tendencies of things. God uses

all things, but not so as to destroy their natural tendencies. They are good or evil, according to their own nature; not according to the use which he makes of them.

THE mind has a constant tendency to conform itself to the sentiments and cast of thinking with which it is chiefly conversant, either among books or men. If the influence remain undetected, it grows soon into an inveterate habit of obliquity. Even if it be detected, it is the most difficult thing in the world to bring back the mind to the standard, especially if there be anything in its constitution which assimilates itself to the error. I was once much in the habit of reading the mystical writers: a book of Dr. Owen's clearly convinced me that they erred: yet I found my mind ever inclining toward them, and winding round like the biassed bowl. I saw clearly the absurdity of the notions in their view of them, and yet I was ever talking of "self-annihilation," &c., and am not even now rid of the thing.

ON THE CHARACTER OF PAUL.

I DELIGHT to contemplate Paul as an appointed pattern. Men might have questioned the propriety of urging on them the example

of Christ. They might have said that we are necessarily in dissimilar circumstances. But Paul stands up in like case with ourselves, a model of ministerial virtues. We consider him, perhaps, in point of character more the immediate subject of extraordinary inspiration, than he was in reality. And this mistake affects our view of him in two different ways.

We suppose, at one time, that his virtues were so much the effect of extraordinary communications, that he is no proper model for us; whereas he was no farther fitted to his circumstances than every Christian has warrant to expect to be, so far as his circumstances are similar. At another time, perhaps, though we acknowledge and revere his distinguished character, yet our view of his virtues is exalted beyond due measure. We should remember that, as he was fitted for his circumstances, so he was, in a great degree, made by them. Many men are, doubtless, executing their appointed task in retirement and silence, who would unfold a character beyond all expectation, if Providence were to lead them into a scene where the world rose up in arms, and they were sent forth into it under a clear conviction of an especial mission. The history of the church seems to show us that the effects of grace, ordinary or

extraordinary, have been the same in all ages.

In speaking of Paul, it has been usual to magnify his learning, among the many other great qualities which he possessed. That point seems never to have been satisfactorily made out. He was an educated Pharisee; but, farther than this, I think we cannot go. His quotations from the Greek poets, are not evidences of even a school boy's learning in our day; for we forget, when we talk of them, that he was a Roman quoting Greek. Nor do I see anything more in his famous speech in the Areopagus, so often produced as evidence on this subject, than the line of argument to which a strong and energetic mind would lead him. If we talk of his talents, indeed, he rises almost beyond admiration; but they were talents of a certain order; and the very display which we have of them seems a strong corroborative proof, that he is not to be considered as a profoundly learned man of his day. For instance, had he studied Aristotle, it would have been almost impossible but he must have caught some influence, which we should have seen in his writings. But there is nothing like the dry, logical, metaphysical character of that school; which yet had then given the law to the seats of science and philosophy. Instead of this, we

see everywhere the copious, diffusive, declaiming, discursive, but sublime, and wise, and effective mind.

THERE is a true apostolicism in the character of Paul. It is a combination of zeal and love.

The zeal of some men is of a haughty, unbending, ferocious character. They have the letter of truth, but they mount the pulpit like prize-fighters. It is with them a perpetual scold. This spirit is a reproach to the gospel. It is not the spirit of Jesus Christ. He seems to have laboured to win men.

But there is an opposite extreme. The love of some men is all milk and mildness! There is so much delicacy, and so much fastidiousness! They touch with so much tenderness! and if the patient shrinks, they will touch no more! The times are too flagrant for such a disposition. The gospel is sometimes preached in this way, till all the people agree with the preacher. He gives no offence, and he does no good!

But Paul united and blended love and zeal. He *must* win souls; but he will labour to do this by all possible lawful contrivances. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Zeal, alone, may degenerate into ferociousness and brutality; and love, alone, into fastidiousness and deli-

cacy; but the apostle combined both qualities; and, more perfectly than other men, realized the union of the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo*.

MISCELLANIES.

THE Moravians seem to have very nearly hit on Christianity. They appear to have found out what sort of a thing it is, its quietness, meekness, patience, spirituality, heavenliness, and order. But they want fire. A very superior woman among them once said to me, that there wanted another body, the character of which should be combined from the Moravians and the Methodists. The Moravians have failed in making too little of preaching; as the Methodists have done, in making too much of it.

THE grandest operations, both in nature and in grace, are the most silent and imperceptible. The shallow brook babbles in its passage, and is heard by every one: but the coming on of the seasons is silent and unseen. The storm rages and alarms; but its fury is soon exhausted, and its effects are partial and soon remedied; but the dew, though gentle and unheard, is immense in quantity, and the very life of large portions of the earth. And

these are pictures of the operations of grace, in the church and in the soul.

ATHEISM is a characteristic of our day. On the sentiments, manners, pursuits, amusements, and dealings of the great body of mankind, there is written in broad characters, "without God in the world!"

I HAVE often had occasion to observe, that a warm blundering man does more for the world than a frigid wise man. A man, who gets into a habit of inquiring about proprieties and expediencies and occasions, often spends his life without doing anything to purpose. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something"—"do it"—"do it."

PROVIDENCE is a greater mystery than religion. The state of the world is more humiliating to our reason, than the doctrines of the gospel. A reflecting Christian sees more to excite his astonishment and to exercise his faith in the state of things between Temple Bar and St. Paul's, than in what he reads from Genesis to Revelation. See the description of the working of God's Providence, in the account of the cherubims in the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel.

THE scheme and machinery of redemption

may be illustrated by the water-works at Marly. We consider a part of that complicated machinery, and we cannot calculate on the effects; but we see that they are produced. We cannot explain to a philosopher the system of redemption, and the mode of conducting and communicating its benefits to the human soul; but we know that it yields the water of life, civilization to a barbarian, direction to a wanderer, support to those that are ready to perish.

It is manifest that God designed to promote intercourse and commerce among men, by giving to each climate its appropriate productions. It is in itself, not only innocent, but laudable. All trade, however, which is founded in embellishment is founded in depravity. So also is that spirit of trade, which pushes men on dangerous competitions. Many tradesmen, professedly religious, seem to look on their trade as a vast engine, which will be worked to no good effect, if it be not worked with the whole vigour of the soul. This is an intoxicating and ruinous mistake. So far as they live under the power of religion, they will pursue their trade for sustenance and provision; but not even that, with unseasonable attention and with eagerness: much less will religion suffer them to bury themselves in it, when its objects are something beyond these: and,

least of all, will it leave them to deceive themselves with certain commercial maxims, so far removed from simplicity and integrity that I have been often shocked beyond measure, at hearing them countenanced and adopted by some religious professors.

EVERY man should aim to do one thing well. If he dissipates his attention on several objects, he may have excellent talents intrusted to him, but they will be intrusted to no good end. Concentrated on his proper object, they might have a vast energy; but, dissipated on several, they will have none. Let other objects be pursued, indeed; but only so far as they may subserve the main purpose. By neglecting this rule, I have seen frivolity and futility written on minds of great power; and, by regarding it, I have seen very limited minds acting in the first rank of their profession. I have seen a large capital and a great stock dissipated, and the man reduced to beggary; and I have seen a small capital and stock improved to great riches.

To effect any purpose in study, the mind must be concentrated. If any other subject plays on the fancy, than that which ought to be exclusively before it, the mind is divided; and both are neutralized, so as to lose their effect. Just as when I learnt two systems of

short-hand. I was familiar with Gurney's method, and wrote it with ease; but, when I took it into my head to learn Byrom's, they destroyed each other, and I could write neither.

THERE should be something obvious, determinate, and positive, in a man's reasons for taking a journey; especially if he be a minister. Such events and consequences may be connected with it in every step, that he ought, in no case, to be more simply dependent on the great Appointer of means and occasions. Several journeys which I thought myself called on to take, I have since had reason to think I should not have taken. Negative and even doubtful reasons may justify him in choosing the safer side of staying at home; but there ought to be something more in the reasons which put him out of his way, to meet the unknown consequences of a voluntary change of station. Let there always be a *because* to meet the *why?*

I SOMETIMES see, as I sit in my pew at St. John's during the service, an idle fellow saunter into the chapel. He gapes about him for a few minutes; finds nothing to interest and arrest him; seems scarcely to understand what is going forward; and, after a lounge or two, goes out again. I look at him, and think, Thou art a wonderful creature! a per-

fect miracle! What a machine is that body! curiously, fearfully, wonderfully framed! An intricate, delicate, but harmonious and perfect structure! And, then, to ascend to thy soul, its nature, its capacities, its actual state, its designation, its eternal condition! I am lost in amazement, while he seems to have no more consciousness of all this than the brutes that perish!

Sin, pursued to its tendencies, would pull God from throne. Though I have a deep conviction of its exceeding sinfulness, I live not a week without seeing some exhibition of its malignity which draws from me, "Well! who could have imagined this!" Sin would subjugate heaven, earth, and hell to itself. It would make the universe the minion of its lusts, and all beings bow down and worship.

It is one of the most awful points of view in which we can consider God, that, as a righteous Governor of the world, concerned to vindicate his own glory, he has laid himself under a kind of holy necessity to purify the unclean, or to sink him into perdition.

It is one of the curses of error, that the man, who is the subject of it, if he has had the opportunity of being better informed, cannot possibly do right, so far as he is under it. He has brought himself into an utter incapacity of acting virtuously; since it is vicious

to obey an ill-informed conscience, if that conscience might have been better informed; and certainly vicious to disobey conscience, whether it be well or ill informed.

THE approaches of sin are like the conduct of Jael. It bring "butter in a lordly dish." It bids high for the soul. But when it has fascinated and lulled the victim, the nail and the hammer are behind.

I HAVE met with one case in my ministry, very frequent and very distressing. A man says to me, "I approve all you say. I *see* things to be just as you state them. I see a necessity, a propriety, a beauty in the religion of Christ. I see it to be interesting and important. But I do not *feel* it. I cannot feel it. I have no spirit of prayer. My heart belies my head; its affections refuse to follow my convictions." If this complaint be ingenuous, it is an evidence of grace; and I say, "Wait for God, and he will appear." But, too often, it is not ingenuous; the heart is actually indisposed; some tyrant holds it in bondage. The complaint is a mockery, because there is no sincerity of endeavour to obtain the object of which it pretends to lament the want; there is no sincere desire and prayer for the quickening and breathing of God's Holy Spirit on the torpid soul.

THE man who labours to "please his neigh-

bour for his good to edification," has the "mind that was in Christ." It is a sinner trying to help a sinner. How different the face of things if this spirit prevailed! If Dissenters were like Henry, and Watts, and Doddridge; and churchmen like Leighton! The man who comes prominently forward in any way may expect to be found fault with; one will call him harsh, and another a trimmer. A hard man may be reverenced, but men will like him best at a distance; he is an iron man; he is not like Jesus Christ. Christ might have driven Thomas from his presence for his unreasonable incredulity; but not so! It is as though he had said, "I will come down to thy weakness; if thou canst not believe without thrusting thy hand into my side, then thrust in thy hand." Even a feeble, but kind and tender man, will effect more than a genius, who is rough or artificial. There is danger, doubtless, of humouring others, and against this we must be on our guard. It is a kind and accommodating spirit at which we must aim. When the two goats met on the bridge which was too narrow to allow them either to pass each other, or to return, the goat which lay down that the other might walk over him, was a finer gentleman than Lord Chesterfield.

To expect disease wherever he goes, and to

lay himself out in the application of remedies, is that habit of mind which is best suited to a Christian while he passes through the world, if he would be most effectually useful.

The Papists and Puritans erred in opposite extremes, in their treatment of mankind. The Papists almost to a man, considered the mass of men as mere animals, and to be led by the senses. Even Fenelon fell into this way of thinking. Some few fine spirits were to be found, which were capable of other treatment: but the herd they thought capable of nothing but seeing and hearing. The Puritans, on the contrary, treated man as though he had nothing of the animal about him. There was among them a total excision of all amusement and recreation. Everything was effort. Everything was severe. I have heard a man of this school preach on the distinction between justifying and saving faith. He tried to make his hearers enter into these niceties; whereas, faith in its bold and leading features, should have been presented to them, if any effect was expected. The bulk of mankind are capable of much more than the Papist allows, but are incapable of that which the Puritan supposes. They should be treated, in opposition to both, as rational and feeling creatures, but upon a bold and palpable ground.

I HAVE seen such sin in the church, that I have been often brought by it to a sickly state of mind. But, when I have turned to the world, I have seen sin working there in such measures and forms, that I have turned back again to the church, with more wisdom of mind and more affection to it—tainted as it is. I see sin, however, nowhere put on such an odious appearance as in the church. It mixes itself with the most holy things, and debases them, and turns them to its own purposes. It builds its nest in the very pinnacles of the temple. The history of the primitive ages of the church has also checked the disgust which would arise from seeing the impure state of things before our eyes. Folly and wickedness sported themselves even then in almost all possible forms. I turn, in such states of mind, to two portraits in my study—John Bradford and Archbishop Leighton. These never fail, in such cases, to speak forcibly to my heart, that, in the midst of all, there is pure religion, and to tell me what that religion is.

THE joy of religion is an exorcist to the mind. It expels the demons of carnal mirth and madness.

THE union of Christians to Christ, their common head, and, by means of the influence which they derive from him, one to ano-

ther, may be illustrated by the loadstone. It not only attracts the particles of iron to itself, by the magnetic virtue; but, by this virtue, it unites them one among another.

SOME considerable defect is always visible, in the greatest men, to a discerning eye. We idolize the best characters, because we see them partially. Let us acknowledge excellence, and ascribe the glory where it is due, while we honour the possessor; but let us remember that God has, by leaving his greatest servants to the natural operation of human frailty, in some point or other of their character, written on the face of the Christian Church, "Cease ye from man!" He does, by perfection in character, as he did by the body of Moses; he hides it, that it may not be idolized. Our affections, our prejudices, or our ignorance, cover the creature with a dazzling veil; but he lifts it up, and seems to say, "see the creature you admire!"

A MAN, who thinks himself to have attained Christian perfection, in the sense in which it has been insisted on by some persons, either deceives himself, by calling sin infirmity, or Satan leaves him undisturbed in false security, or the demon of pride overcomes the demon of lust.

THE trials of the tempted Christian are

often sent for the use of others, and are made the riches of all around him.

If I were not penetrated with a conviction of the truth of the Bible, and the reality of my own experience, I should be confounded on all sides; from within, and from without; in the world, and in the church.

If a good man cannot prevent evil, he will hang heavy on its wings, and retard its progress.

We are too much disposed to look at the outside of things. The face of every affair chiefly affects us. Were God to draw aside the veil, and to show us but a little of the reality, and the relations of the most apparently mysterious and complicated dispensations, we should acquiesce with reverence and admiration. A minister, for example, may be taken away in the beginning of a promising career, or in the midst of great usefulness. If we cannot perceive any direct reason for this providence, we stand amazed. But, if we could look forward into the further life of such men, we should probably see that they were taken away in mercy to themselves, to the church, or to the world.

I have seen too much of life to have anything to do in the troubled waters of my friends, by way of giving advice; unless they

will allow me to remain in secret. This especially applies to some Christians of more sincerity than prudence. An opinion given on difficult and controverted cases, in confidence of its being used only as a private principle of action, has been quoted as authority in defence of the conduct founded on it.

MANY duties are involved in the very nature of religion, concerning which there is perhaps not one express precept to be found in the Scriptures. Private, family, or public devotions, are no where enjoined, as to the time, or frequency, or manner of performing them. Yet they are so strongly implied in the very nature of religion, and they are supposed so necessarily to flow from the divine principle of spiritual life in the soul, that those men greatly err who think themselves not obliged by their religion to the most diligent use of them that circumstances will allow. And, surely, we may trace here the footsteps of divine wisdom. If it had been said, "Thou shalt do this or that, at such and such times," this would have brought a yoke on the neck of the Christian; and, even when absolutely unavoidable circumstances prevented him from complying with the injunction, would have left sin on his conscience. While the way in which the duty is enforced leaves him a Christian liberty that is abun-

dantly guarded against all licentiousness, he sees the duty implied and exemplified in a thousand instances throughout the Scripture. The same principle is applicable to certain pursuits, which occupy the men of the world; the general unlawfulness of which is fully implied, though they neither are nor could have been forbidden by name.

NOTHING seems important to me but so far as it is connected with morals. The end, the *cui bono*, enters into my view of everything. Even the highest acts of the intellect become criminal trifling, when they occupy much of the time of a moral creature, and especially of a minister. If the mind cannot feel and treat mathematics and music and everything else as a trifle, it has been seduced and enslaved. Brainerd, and Grimshaw, and Fletcher were men. Most of us are dwarfs.

IN imitating examples, there are two rules to be regarded; we must not stretch ourselves beyond our measure; nor must we despise that in another which is unsuitable to ourselves.

A PIECE has been written to prove that the gospel is preached to sinners, only in the lowest state of misery and imbecility. Some men get hold of an opinion, and push it so far that it meets and contradicts other opinions, fairly

deducible from Scripture. And it is no uncommon thing with them to suppose that nobody else holds the same opinion; when, if they look into the minds of other men, they would find themselves deceived. We preach the gospel to sinners in the lowest condition; and the only reason I do not preach it to devils is, that I find no gospel provided for devils. As to the Roman Catholic notion of a grace of congruity, in their sense of it, I utterly disclaim it. Some of the best of them taught that God prepared the heart for himself in various unseen ways. And who can deny this? But this is far different from the notion, that some minds have a natural congruity or suitableness to the gospel. The fallow-ground of the heart may be broken up, ploughed, and prepared by unseen and most circuitous means. I have gone from hearing a man, who knew spiritual religion, preach incomparable nonsense, to hear a man of a carnal mind and habits, who knew nothing of spiritual religion, preach incomparable sense, and I thought the carnal preacher much most likely to call men to some feeling of religion.

THE imagination is the grand organ, whereby truth can make successful approaches to the mind. Some preachers deal much with the passions; they attack the

hopes and fears of men. But this is a very different thing from the right use of the imagination, as the medium of impressing truth. Jesus Christ has left perfect patterns of this way of managing men. But it is a distinct talent, and a talent committed to very few. It is an easy thing to move the passions; a rude, blunt, illiterate attack may do this. But, to form one new figure for the conveyance of truth to the mind, is a difficult thing. The world is under no small obligation to the man who forms such a figure. The French strain this point so far that the effort is continually seen. To be effective, there must be about it a *naïveté*, an ease, a self-evidence. The figures of the French writers vanish from the mind, like the flourish of a musical band. The figures of Jesus Christ sink into the mind, and leave there the indelible impress of the truth which they convey.

THE religious world has a great momentum. Money and power in almost any quantity, are brought forth into action, when any fair object is set before it. It is a pendulum that swings with prodigious force. But it wants a regulator. If there is no regulating force on it of sufficient power, its motions will be so violent and eccentric, that it will tear the machine to pieces. And, therefore, when I have any influence in its designs and schemes,

I cannot help watching them with extreme jealousy, to throw in every directing and regulating power which can be obtained from any quarter.

NOTHING can be proposed so wild or so absurd, as not to find a party, and often a very large party, ready to espouse it. It is a sad reflection on human nature, but it is too true. Every day's experience and history confirm it. It would have argued gross ignorance of mankind to expect even Swedenborgianism to be rejected at once by the common sense of men. He, who laid the snare, knew that if a few characters of some learning and respectability could be brought to espouse it, there would be soon a silly multitude ready to follow.

THE religious world has many features, which are distressing to a holy man. He sees in it much proposal and ostentation, covering much surface. But Christianity is deep and substantial. A man is soon enlisted; but he is not soon made a soldier. He is easily put into the ranks, to make a show there; but he is not so easily brought to do the duties of the ranks. We are too much like an army of Asiatics; they count well, and cut a good figure; but when they come into action, one has no flint, another has no cartridge. The arms of one are rusty,

and another has not learnt to handle them. This was not the complaint equally at all times. It belongs too peculiarily to the present day. The fault lies in the muster. We are like Falstaff. He took the king's money to press good men and true, but got together such ragamuffins that he was ashamed to muster them. What is the consequence? People groan under their connections. Respectable persons tell me such stories of their servants who profess religion, as to shame and distress me. High pretensions to spirituality, warm zeal for certain sentiments, priding themselves in Mr. Such-a-one's ministry. But what becomes of their duties? Oh these are "beggarly elements" indeed! Such persons are alive to religious *talk;* but, if you speak to them on religious *tempers*, the subject grows irksome.

Admiration and feeling are very distinct from each other. Some music and oratory enchant and astonish, but they speak not to the heart. I have been overwhelmed by Hendel's music: the Dettingen Te Deum is, perhaps, the greatest composition in the world; yet I never, in my life, heard Handel, but I could think of something else at the same time. There is a kind of music that will not allow this. Dr. Worgan has so touched the organ at St. John's, that I have

been turning backward and forward over the Prayer Book for the first lesson in Isaiah, and wondered that I could not find Isaiah there! The musician and orator fall short of the full power of their science, if the hearer is left in possession of himself.

THE church of England is not fitted, in its present state, for a general church. Its secularity must be purged away. We shall hasten that day when Christians shall be of one heart and one mind, if we inculcate the spirit of charity in our respective circles. I have aimed much at this point, and shall push it further. The rest must be left to Providence. He only can, by unknown means, heal the schisms of the church, and unite it together as one external body: and that this will be done as some think, by persecution, appears highly probable. I see no other means adequate to the end.

HYPOCRISY is folly. It is much easier, safer, and pleasanter, to be the thing which a man aims to appear, than to keep up the appearance of being what he is not. When a Christian is truly such, he acts from a nature, a new nature, and all the actings of that nature have the ease and pleasantness of nature in them.

HUMILIATION is the spirit of our dispensa-

tion, not a creeping, servile, canting humility, but an entire self-renunciation. The Mystics often talk admirably on the subject. Pride is the most universal and inveterate of all vices. Every man is a proud man, though all are not equally proud. No sin harasses the Christian so much, nor accompanies him so unweariedly. Its forms of exhibiting itself are infinitely varied, and none are more common than the affectation of humility. The assumption of the garb of humility, in all its shades, is generally but an expression of a proud mind. Pride is the master-sin of the spirit; and the grace of God, in the whole tenor of our dispensation, is directed against it.

I EXTEND the circle of real religion very widely. Many men fear God, and love God, and have a sincere desire to serve him, whose views of religious truth are very imperfect, and in some points perhaps utterly false. But I doubt not that many such persons have a state of heart acceptable before God.

MAN is a creature of extremes. The middle path is generally the wise path; but there are few wise enough to find it. Because Papists have made too much of some things, Protestants have made too little of them. The Papists treat man as all sense; and, therefore, some Protestants would treat him as all spirit. Because one party has exalted

the virgin Mary to a divinity, the other can scarcely think of that most highly favoured among women with common respect. The Papist puts the Apocrypha into his canon; the Protestant will scarcely regard it as an ancient record. The popish heresy of human merit in justification, drove Luther on the other side into most unwarrantable and unscriptural statements of that doctrine. The Papists consider grace as inseparable from the participation of the sacraments; the Protestants too often lose sight of them as instituted means of conveying grace.

THE language of irreligion in the heart is, "Give, give, now, now, whatever the flesh and the eye lust after, and whatever gratifies the pride of life. Give it now; for, as to any reversion, I will not sacrifice a single lust for it; or, if I must have a religion, it shall be anything rather than that demeaning system which makes everything a mere boon."

INSTEAD of attempting any logical and metaphysical explanation of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, all which attempts have human infirmity stamped upon them, I would look at the subject in the great and impressive light in which Scripture places it before me. It teaches me to regard the intervention of Christ for me, as the sole ground of all expectation toward God. In

consideration of his sufferings, my guilt is remitted, and I am restored to that which I had lost by sin. Let us add to this, that the sufferings of Christ were in our stead, and we shall see the point of view in which Scripture sets him forth as the deserver and procurer to us of all pardon and grace. The thing is declared, not explained. Let us not therefore darken a subject which is held forth in a prominent light, by our idle endeavours to make it better understood.

REGENERATION and conversion may be distinguished from each other, though they cannot be separated. They may be distinguished; as a man's being disposed to go in a certain road, and his actually going in that road, may be distinguished: for regeneration is God's disposing the heart to himself; but conversion is the actual turning of the heart to God.

THERE is an immeasurable distance between the genuine and the spurious Christian. The genuine Christian may be weak, wild, eccentric, fanatical, faulty, but he is right-hearted; you find "the root of the matter" in him. The spurious Christian is the most dangerous of men, and one of the most difficult to deal with. You see what he is, but you find it almost impossible to keep clear of him. He will seek your acquaintance, in

order to authenticate his own character, to indorse his own reputation. But avoid him. His errors and vices will be assigned to the church, by an indiscriminating world. There is less danger in associating with worldly people by profession, and more tenderness to be exercised toward them. Paul teaches us the distinction, 1 Cor. v. 9–11.

I FEEL disposed to treat carnal men and carnal ministers with tenderness, to show them that I am not a spiritually proud man. Let them see that you have some secret in possession, which keeps you quiet, humble, patient, holy, meek, and affectionate, in a turbulent and passionate world.

THE character of Balaam is not uncommon in the church. I have been amazed to see religious professors, whose ungodly character has been known and read of all men, who have nevertheless entertained a good opinion of themselves. I have accounted for it, by supposing that they build entirely on the distinction of their views of truth from those of other men. They know the points; they see the distinctions; and, moreover, they approve what they know, and desire to die the death of the righteous and be where they are; and, certainly, they must be the men of God's council, and the men who stand on his side against the world!

I HAVE long adopted an expedient, which I have found of singular service. I have a shelf in my study, for tried authors; and one in my mind, for tried principles and characters. When an author has stood a thorough examination, and will bear to be taken as a guide, I put him on the shelf! When I have more fully made up my mind on a principle, I put it on the shelf! A hundred subtle objections may be brought against this principle: I may meet with some of them, perhaps; but my principle is on the shelf! Generally, I may be able to recall the reasons which weighed with me to put it there; but if not, I am not to be sent out to sea again. Time was, when I saw through and detected all the subtleties that could be brought against it. I have past evidence of having been fully convinced; and there on the shelf it shall lie!

When I have turned a character over and over on all sides, and seen it through and through in all situations, I put it on the shelf. There may be conduct in the person which may stumble others; there may be great inconsistencies: there may be strange and unaccountable turns, but I have put that character on the shelf. Difficulties will all be cleared up; everything will come round again. I should be much chagrined, indeed, to be obliged to take a character down which I had

once put up ; but that has never been the case with me yet ; and the best guard against it, is not to be too hasty in putting them there.

Influence, whether derived from money, talents or connections, is power. There is no person so insignificant, but he has much of this power ; the little Israelitish maid, in Naaman's family, is an instance. Some, indeed, suppose that they have more power than they really have ; but we generally think we have less than we in reality have. Whoever neglects or misapplies this power, is an unprofitable servant ; unbelief, timidity, and delicacy often cramp its exertion ; but it is our duty to call ourselves out to the exertion of this power, as Mordecai called out Esther (ch. iv.:) it is our duty to watch against everything that might hinder or pervert our influence ; for mere regard to reputation will often carry many into error. Who would not follow Aaron in worshipping the golden calf ? Even men of feeble public talents may acquire much influence by kindness and consistency of character ; ministers are defective in resting their personal influence too much on their public ministry ; time will give weight to a man's character ; and it is one advantage to a man to be cast early into his situation, that he may earn a character.

The instances of artifice which occur in

Scripture are not to be imitated but avoided. If Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob equivocate in order to obtain their ends, this is no warrant to me to do so. David's falsehood concerning Goliath's sword argued distrust of God. If any part of the truth which I am bound to communicate be concealed, this is sinful artifice. The Jesuits in China, in order to remove the offence of the cross, declared that it was a falsehood invented by the Jews that Christ was crucified; but they were expelled from the empire; and this was designed, perhaps, to be held up as a warning to all missionaries, that no good end is to be carried by artifice.

But address is of a different nature. There is no falsehood, deception, or equivocation in address. Paul, for instance, employed lawful address, and not artifice, when he set the Sadducees and Pharisees at variance. He employed a lawful argument to interest the Pharisees in his favour. This was great address, but it had nothing of criminal artifice. In Joshua's ambushes for the men of Ai there was nothing sinful; it was a lawful stratagem of war; it would have been unlawful to tell the men of Ai there was no ambush; but they knew that they came out of their city liable to such ambushes. Christ's conduct at Emmaus, and that of the angels of Sodom,

were meant as trials of the regard of those with whom they were conversing.

PRECIPITATION is acting without sufficient grounds of action. Youth is the peculiar season of precipitation. The young man's motto is "onward!" There is no such effectual cure of this evil, as experience; when a man is made to feel the effects of his precipitation, both in body and mind; and God alone can thus bring a man acquainted with himself. There is a self-blindness in precipitation. A precipitate man is, at the time, a blind man. "That be far from thee!" said Peter; "this shall not happen to thee." "As the Lord liveth," said David, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die!"

There is great criminality in precipitation. A man under its influence is continually tempted to take God's work out of his hands. It is not a state of dependence. It betrays want of patience with respect to God, and want of faith, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul." It discovers a want of charity. In a rash moment we may do an injury to our neighbour, which we can never repair.

There are few who do not feel that they are suffering through life the effects of their own precipitation. "He," then, "that trusteth his own heart, is a fool." In precipitate

moments we should learn to say, "I am not now the man to give an opinion, or to take a single step!"

METHOD, as Mrs. More says, is the very hinge of business; and there is no method without punctuality. Punctuality is important, because it subserves the peace and good temper of a family. The want of it not only infringes on necessary duty, but sometimes excludes this duty. Punctuality is important as it gains time. It is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one. The calmness of mind which it produces, is another advantage of punctuality. A disorderly man is always in a hurry; he has no time to speak with you, because he is going elsewhere; and when he gets there, he is too late for his business, or he must hurry away to another before he can finish it. It was a wise maxim of the Duke of Newcastle—"I do one thing at a time." Punctuality gives weight to character. Such a man has made an appointment; then I know he will keep it. And this generates punctuality in you; for, like other virtues, it propagates itself. Servants and children must be punctual, where their leader is so. Appointments, indeed, become debts. I owe you punctuality, if I have made an appoint-

ment with you; and have no right to throw away your time if I do my own.

It is a difficult question in casuistry—How far a man is bound to betray confidence for the general good. Let it be considered what consequences would follow from a man's disclosing all the evil he knows. The world would become a nest of scorpions. He must often mistake, and of course calumniate. Such is his incapacity to determine what is really evil in his neighbour, and such are the mischiefs frequently arising from the disclosure of even what should be in truth evil, that he seems rather called on to be silent, till circumstances render it a case of duty to remain silent no longer. But if this be his general rule, it will be his duty to observe silence much oftener in cases of confidence. Professional men, a minister, a lawyer, a medical man, have an official secrecy imposed on them. If this were not the case, a distrest conscience could never unburthen itself to its confessor. Incalculable injuries to health and property must be sustained, for want of proper advisers. This applies in a very high sense to a minister, considered as a confessor, a director of the conscience. An alarmed conscience will unfold its most interior recesses before him. It is said Dr. Owen advised a man, who, under religious convic-

tions confessed to him a murder which he had perpetrated some years before, to surrender himself up to justice. The man did so, and was executed. I think Dr. Owen erred in his advice. I thought myself right, in urging on persons who have opened their hearts to me, deep humiliation before God for crimes committed in an unconverted state; but, as it had pleased Him to give a thorough hatred of those crimes to the mind, and a consequent self-loathing and humiliation, and yet to allow in his providence that they should have remained undiscovered, I judged that the matter might be safely left with him. Yet there may be cases in which general consequences require that confidence should be betrayed. Such cases usually relate to evil in progress. To prevent or counteract such evil, it may be necessary to disclose what has been entrusted in confidence. Yet the party should be honestly warned, if his purposes are not changed, what duty your conscience will require.

I HAVE felt twice in my life very extraordinary impressions after sermons, and that from men least calculated to affect me. A man of great powers, but so dissipated on everything that he knew nothing, a frivolous, futile babbler, whom I was ready almost to despise, surprised and chained me so, in my

own church at Lewes, that I was thunderstruck: I think it was concerning the dove not finding rest for the sole of her foot. He felt the subject strongly himself; and in spite of all my prejudices against him, and my real knowledge of his character, he made me feel it as I have scarcely ever done before or since. In the other instance, I had to do with a very different character. He was a simple, but weak man; it pleased God, however, to shoot an arrow by his hand into my heart. I had been some time in a dry, fruitless frame, and was persuading myself that all was going on well. He said one day, at Lewes, with an indescribable simplicity, that "men might cheer themselves in the morning, and they might pass on tolerably well perhaps without God at noon; but the cool of the day was coming, when God would come down to talk with them." It was a message from God to me. I felt as though God had descended into the church, and was about to call me to my account! In the former instance, I was more surprised and astonished than affected religiously; but, in this, I was unspeakably moved.

CONSTITUTIONAL bias is a suspicious interpreter of providential leadings. A man's besetting sin lies in that to which his nature is most inclined; and, therefore, to walk wisely

and holily, he should be very jealous of such supposed leadings in providence as draw with his constitutional propensity. He is never safe, unless he is in the act of collaring his nature as a rebel, and forcing it into submission. A *sanguine* man sees a sign and token in everything; in every ordinary occurrence, his imagination hears a call; his pious fancy is the source and food of an eager, disquieted, and restless habit of mind. An *enterprising* man has great facility in finding God in whatever seems to open to honour, or influence, or power. But he has lost the right estimate of things; if God seem to draw with an enterprising mind, the man should stand and tremble. Providence may really lead some retired and humble men into situations which the ambitious man would covet; but, even in that case, it is not to be regarded as an evidence of favour, so much as an increase of trial and responsibility: but he can never open before an enterprising and ambitious character, unless in judgment, or in such imminence of trial as should call the man to self-suspicion and humility. A *pleasurable* man easily discerns God's hand in everything, which seems to put his favourite indulgences within his power. Such a thing was a great providence! and he is vastly grateful! while he sees not that he is led away to broken cisterns. An *idle* man has a constant tendency

to torpidity. He has adopted the Indian maxim—that it is better to walk than to run, and better to stand than to walk, and better to sit than to stand, and better to lie than to sit. He hugs himself into the notion, that God calls him to be quiet; that he is not made for bustling and noise; that such and such a thing plainly shows him he ought to retire and sit still! A *busy* man is never at rest; he sees himself called so often into action, that he digs too much to suffer anything to grow, and waters so profusely that he drowns. The danger in all these cases is, lest a man should bless himself in his snares!

Mr. Adam well observes, "A poor country parson, fighting against the devil in his parish, has nobler ideas than Alexander had." Men of the world know nothing of true glory. They know nothing of the grandeur of that sentiment, "Thou, O God, art the thing I long for!" You may, perhaps, find this sentiment in the corner of some monastery, where a poor ignorant creature is mumbling over his prayers; or, it may even be found to exist with the nonsense and fanaticism of a Swedenborgian; but, wherever it is, it is true dignity.

Look at the bravery of the world! Go into the Park. Who is the object of admiration there? The captain swelling and strut-

ting at the head of his corps! And what is there at the court? "Make way! Make way!" And who is this? A bit of clay with a ribbon tied around it! Now it makes nothing against the comparative emptiness and littleness of these things, that I or any man should be ensnared by them, and play the fool with the rest of the species. Truth is truth, and dignity is dignity, in spite of the errors and follies of any man living.

But this is the outside. What are the greatest minds, and the noblest projects of the world, compared with a Christian! Take Mr. Pitt for instance; and contrast him with the most insignificant old woman in the church of Christ! If the Bible be not true you have no standard; all your reasonings, and science, and philosophy, and metaphysics, are gross absurdity and folly. But if the Bible be true, Mr. Pitt, great and noble as he is, yet, considered as a mere politician, even Mr. Pitt has a little, contracted, mean mind; a driveller, an earth worm! Compared with his projects and schemes, the old woman, who rises at two o'clock in the morning, lights her farthing candle, stands all day over her wash-tub, at night puts on her red cloak, steals out to some place of worship, hears the truths of the gospel mangled perhaps with ignorant yet honest zeal, but draws in good into an honest and prepared heart—why, this woman is a

heroine, a noble mind, compared with the greatest of men, considered as a mere man of this world!

Bishop Wilkins has said admirably, that nothing in man is great, but, so far as it is connected with God. The only wise thing recorded of Xerxes, is his reflection on the sight of his army, that not one of that immense multitude would survive a hundred years; it seems to have been a momentary gleam of true light and feeling.

APPENDIX.

REMARKS BY MR. CECIL, COMMUNICATED TO THE EDITOR BY SOME FRIENDS.

A HIDING-PLACE implies secrecy. He who can say unto God, "Thou art my hiding-place," may go abroad about his affairs, and may pass through a thousand dangers, and yet, at the same time, have such a hiding-place, in the favour and protection of God, that, when he seems to be exposed on every side, still he is secured and hidden from every evil.

A GREAT man, however high his office and talents, is dependent on little things. Jonah was exceedingly glad of his gourd. However splendid and towering, man is crushed beneath the moth, if God does not uphold him: so that while we are admiring the great man as he is called, and however he may be disposed to admire himself, and to speak great swelling words of vanity, facts will show that he is a poor, dependent creature, who cannot live a moment without God. If the Holy Spirit opens his eyes, he will perceive that he cannot stand alone; but he can only

support himself and climb, like the ivy, by clasping one stronger than himself.

DREAMS are common to sleeping. No man begins to slumber in religion, but he falls into some golden dream. It is a device of Satan to seduce men into a drowsy state, and then to beguile them with some dream. When the duties of religion become irksome, then he presents some novelty which allures and deceives us; whereas, had we been in life and vigour, we should have detected the deceit.

THERE are no greater objects of pity in the world, than men who are admired by all around for their nice discernment and fine taste in everything of a worldly nature, but have no taste for the riches that endure forever, no love for God or his word, no love for Christ or their souls. In such a state, however admired or respected, they cannot see the kingdom of God.

A SPIRITUAL man is a character that rises far above all worldly wisdom and science. He is described by our Lord as "born of the Spirit." Spiritual senses are given to him. He has a spiritual taste that rejects whatever is injurious, and gladly receives whatever is salutary to the spiritual life. He desires "the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby." He has a spiritual sight.

He looks "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." He smells a sweet savour in the things of God. "His name is as ointment poured forth." He has a quick feeling. And he has a spiritual ear; "My sheep hear my voice." He lives in a world of his own; he is tried by spiritual conflicts, and supported by spiritual comforts. If the things of God do not afford him consolation, he droops, and nothing in this world can lift up his head. He will say to every other object, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" He is pursuing a spiritual end, and while others boast and are puffed up with their great attainments, he is humbled in the dust, and gives all glory to God.

THERE are critical circumstances, under which a man who is in general on his guard, is called to redouble his Christian vigilance. If he is about to encounter imminent danger, for instance, he will take care to secure himself by every possible means. A house may be well guarded and secured, but, if there is any fear and expectation of thieves, every place will be doubly barred and watched. Good care may be taken, in the general habits of a family, to guard against fire; but if it be known that a spark has fallen among any combustibles, every possible search is made to discover it and to prevent its ravages.

Thus should every servant of Christ redouble his guard in critical circumstances. He should remember that, while awful providences seem to be threatening us, and while we are surrounded with dangers on every side, and while the enemy of our souls is going about "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," it ill becomes us to trifle. Let us stir up ourselves, and attend to our Master's admonition, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

If Paul had not been an entire character, he would not have spoken so ingenuously of himself as he does in the 7th to the Romans. He would have acted as many others have done; he would have put the best aspect on things. He would not have opened "the chambers of imagery;" and have showed, while all the church was admiring him, what was passing within. Here were real simplicity and humility; nothing of that Pharisee which he once was. The Pharisee is become a publican; the reality is coming forward; and he seems to say, "Is any man groaning under 'a body of sin and death?' On searching his heart, does he find that therein 'dwelleth no good thing?' This is my case also; and if I have anything wherein to glory, it is in Christ and not in myself."

CHARITY should teach us to exercise hope and love toward all men—hope toward those who are without, and love toward those who are within the walls of the city of God. Of those without, we are apt to despair too soon, and to say, "There is no hope;" when we should labour to allure them into the church of God, and to impress them with a sense of its glory and its privileges. Toward those within the walls, we sometimes fail in the exercise of love. We are too much influenced in our feelings toward them by a difference of education, taste, or disposition; while the great question ought to be, "Are they really 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God?'" And, if so, whatever their defects may be, we ought to honour and love them as the "temples of the Holy Ghost."

WHEN Christians are delivered from trouble, they are apt soon to forget it, and to lose sight of the holy resolutions formed while under affliction. The strong impressions soon decay. Whereas, if we were enabled to "glory in tribulation;" if our conscience were made tender; if more reality were put into our prayers; we should take heed how we give way to an evil heart of unbelief. We should remember, too, how our troubles were brought on us, and the benefits which

we received while they continued. We should watch that we might not estimate them falsely; and at all times we should bear it in our mind, that it is not suffering which hurts us, but sin.

Some men will follow Christ on certain conditions; if he will not lead them through rough roads; if he will not enjoin them any painful tasks; if the sun and wind do not annoy them; if he will remit a part of his plan and order. But the true Christian, who has the spirit of Jesus, will say, as Ruth said to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go!" whatever difficulties and dangers may be in the way.

It is our happiness, as Christians, that, however we may change our place, we shall never change our object. Whatever we lose, we shall not lose that which we esteem "better than life." God has made to us this gracious promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." And though we may endure much affliction, and pass through many deep waters, yet this is our honour and comfort, "the Lord is with us!" and then, what is difficulty? what is tribulation? what is death? Death to a Christian is but an entrance into the city of God! It is but joining a more blessed company, and singing in a more exalted strain, than he can do in this world.

THE *way* of every man is declarative of the *end* of that man.

How difficult is it to show those who are in the house of mourning, that God is teaching them, that, if they had not leaned so much on their creature-supports, they had not been so broken! Still they are crying, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" Why is it that we are shocked to see the world falling to pieces around us, when we shall leave it ourselves to-morrow, perhaps to-day? We forget that it is the design of God to dash everything to pieces. It is by these trials that we begin to learn we have been walking by sense rather than by faith; and looking at our children and our possessions as though we were never to lose them.

IT is by *faith* that we are relieved under the difficulties of *sense*. Sense revolts, when it views our great high Priest on the cross. Faith glories in this object! Sense talks like the Jews: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be now the the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Faith lays hold on him as the Saviour of the world, and cries, "Lord! remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" Sense envies the prosperous worldling, and calls him happy. Faith goes into the sanctuary, to see what his end will

be. When the waves run high, Sense clamours. Faith says, "Speak but the word, and the winds and waves shall obey thee." When we feel our "earthly house of this tabernacle" taking down, Sense sinks; but Faith says, "We know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

WISDOM prepares for the worst; but folly leaves the worst for that day when it comes.

ABRAHAM teaches us the right way of conversing with God: "And Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him!" When we plead with him our faces should be in the dust. We shall not then speak lightly of him, nor complain; nor will there be any more boasting. We shall abase ourselves and exalt God!

THE Christian's secret intercourse with God will make itself manifest to the world. We may not see the husbandman cast the seed into the ground, yet when the corn grows and ripens we know that it was sown. The mere professor, who may be found everywhere but in his secret chamber, may think that with care he shall pass for a good Christian; but he mistakes, for the spirit *will* discover itself, of what sort it is. He, who would walk safely

and honourably, must walk closely with God in secret.

A VARIETY of circumstances renders the sinner's first approaches to Christ difficult. They, who find an *easy* access, will find an easy departure when troubles arise.

THE most likely method we can take to hasten the removal of what we love is, to value it too much; to think on it with endless anxiety; to live on its favour with solicitude. It shall soon either become a thorn in our side, or be taken away.

"BE ye not unequally yoked." If a believer marries an unbeliever, the miseries which ensue are endless. Were they determined in kindness to grant all they could to each other, yet they live as in two separate worlds. There is a great gulf between them, which cannot be passed without the grace of God; on which, while all should hope and pray for it, none should presume They cannot taste the same pleasures, nor share the same sorrows, nor pursue the same objects, nor walk in the same path. What hope, then, can there be of comfort? Every Christian finds the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and the devices of Satan, together with innumerable secret anxieties, quite enough to struggle with, in his journey

to heaven, without adding another to his difficulties.

In studying the word of God, digest it under these two heads; either as removing obstructions, which keep God and thee asunder; or as supplying some uniting power to bring God and thee together.

Perhaps it is a greater energy of divine power, which keeps the Christian from day to day, from year to year, praying, hoping, running, believing, against all hindrances; which maintains him as a living martyr, than that which bears him up for an hour in sacrificing himself at the stake.

By the course of his providence, God will assert the liberty of his counsel.

Let me ask, every day, what reference it has to the day of judgment; and cultivate a disposition to be reminded of that day.

Indulge not a gloomy contempt of anything which is in itself good; only let it keep its place.

God has called us to meet his best gift to man—his only-begotten Son—not in a splendid court, but in a manger! in the wilderness! in Gethsemane! before the high priest, when they spat in his face and buffeted him, and smote him! at the cross! and at the sepul-

chre! Thus it is that he corrects the pride and ambition of the human heart.

THERE is in sin, not only an infinite mischief done to the man, but it is accompanied by an infatuation that surpasses all description. When the heart declines from God, and loses communion with Christ, the man resembles one in a consumption, who is on the brink of the grave and yet talks of a speedy recovery! A death will come on the spirit, which will be perceived and felt by all around. Yet, when the most affectionate friends of such a man attempt to expostulate, they often find him not only insensible, but obstinate and stout-hearted. He who, like Samson, the champion of Israel, lays his head on the lap of temptation, will rarely rise again as he lay down. He may say, "I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself;" but "he wots not that the Lord is departed from him!" "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not!"

THE whole life of Christ was one continued expression of the same desire, "let me lay aside my glory, let me expire on the cross; so that thy kingdom may come!" And the blood of every martyr, whoever suffered in the cause of God, cried, "Let thy kingdom come!"

GROWTH in grace manifests itself by a sim-

plicity, that is, a greater naturalness of character. There will be more usefulness, and less noise; more tenderness of conscience, and less scrupulosity. There will be more peace, more humility. When the full corn is in the ear, it bends down because it is full.

The history of all the great characters of the Bible is summed up in this one sentence; they acquainted themselves with God, and acquiesced in his will in all things.

God's way of answering the Christian's prayer for an increase of patience, experience, hope, and love, usually is to put him into the furnace of tribulation. James therefore says, "Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations." People of the world "count it all joy" when they are in ease and affluence; but a Christian is taught to "count it all joy," when he is tried as gold in the fire.

In Christ we see the most perfect exhibition of every grace, to which we, as his followers, are called. Let there be but in us that poverty of spirit, that disposition to bear with provocations, and to forgive injuries; that obedience to God and acquiescence in his will; that perseverance in doing good; that love which overcometh all difficulties; that meekness, humility, patience, compassion,

and gentleness which were found in Christ; and if any man should be so ignorant and debased as to imagine that this is not *true dignity* of character, let it be remembered that this was "the mind which was also in Christ Jesus."

LOOKING back is more than we can sustain without going back!

WHEN the multitudes followed our Lord on a particular occasion, although he wished for retirement, and had gone purposely to seek it, yet he gave up his design and attended to them. Mark the condescension and tenderness of such conduct, in opposition to a sour, monastic, morose temper. We are too fond of our own will. We want to be doing what we fancy mighty things; but the great point is, to do small things, when called to them, in a right spirit.

THE world will allow of a vehemence approaching to ecstasy, on almost any occasion but that which, above all others, will justify it.

A CHRISTIAN will find his parenthesis for prayer, even through his busiest hours.

WE treat sensible and present things as realities, and future and eternal things as fables; whereas the reverse should be our habit.

An enthusiast will court trouble, and that for itself; but a Christian, while he does not court it, yet rejoices in it; not for its own sake, but because he knows that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope—a hope that maketh not ashamed." While patience is the fruit of his conflicts and trials, he gains experience by them. He acquires the knowledge which a traveller obtains in performing a long journey. He is in possession of a bundle of choice maxims and observations, gathered with much pains. He is taught by them to know his own heart. He is brought acquainted with the faithfulness and mercy of God, in holding him up in the deep waters, and accompanying him through the fire of affliction. And this experience produces hope—a hope that he is savingly united to Christ, a hope that he is in the church of God, a hope of the glory of God, a hope that "maketh not ashamed," keeping us steady at anchor through every storm, and when every other support fails.

There are but two states in the world which may be pronounced happy—either that of the man who rejoices in the light of God's countenance, or that of him who mourns after it.

Let the warm-hearted Christian be careful

of receiving a wrong bias in religion. When a ball is in motion, almost anything presented to it obliquely will turn it wholly out of its course. Beware, therefore, of a wrong direction in Christianity. Fix your attention ever on such examples as John and Paul, and hear how they speak: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Marantha!"

GOD denies a Christian nothing, but with a design to give him something better.

GOD teaches some of his best lessons in the school of affliction. It is said that Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians has quite the spirit and air of a prison. That school must be truly excellent, which produces such experience and wisdom.

WE cannot build too confidently on the merits of Christ, as our only hope; nor can we think too much of "the mind that was in Christ," as our great example.

A CHRISTIAN does not "glory in tribulation," as he does in the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the *object* in which he glories; but he glories in tribulation as an appointed *means* and *instrument* in the hand of God, of accomplishing his own pleasure and promoting our real good.

NEVER was there a man of deep piety, who has not been brought into extremities; who has not been put into the fire; who has not been taught to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!"

A CHRISTIAN'S steps are not only safe, but steady. "He that believeth shall not make haste." When danger approaches, he shall not be thrown into confusion from his alarm, so as to be ready to say, "Whither shall I run?" but, finding himself on safe ground, he shall be quiet. Being built on the sure foundation, and established in Christ, he shall not make haste in his expectations. He shall not make haste with respect to the promises, as though they were long in their accomplishment, knowing that "all the promises of God are yea, and, in Christ, amen!" In affliction, he shall not make haste in running to broken cisterns, as Asa did, when "in his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." He shall not be alarmed, or driven about, as one who has not a stronghold to enter; but shall say, "None of these things move me! neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy!" With respect to his character, the Christian shall not make haste. If a cloud come over his reputation, and men will suspect his integrity without grounds, he will

commit himself to God, and wait his opportunity, and not make rash haste to justify and clear his character.

When a man can say, "My God!" if he can add no more, that is sufficient; for my God is all-wise in appointing, and almighty to uphold and to deliver. My God is a Father to me in Christ; yea, he is a Father who hid his face from Christ for my good. If, then, I am in darkness, let me remember that God never had a son that was not sometimes in the dark; for even Christ, his only begotten Son, cried out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

Few Christians, if any, sufficiently honour Christ, as governing their concerns. They do not say, "Now, while I am praying on earth, my Saviour is working for me in heaven. He is saying to one, 'Do this!'—and to another, 'Do that!'—and all for my good!" While Jeremiah was, doubtless, crying to God out of the dungeon, Ebed-melech was interceding for him with the king, and they were preparing the means of his deliverance. See Jer. xxxviii.

Let the restless, comfortless state of a backslider distinguish him from an apostate.

If you have set out in the ways of God, do

not stumble at present difficulties. Go forward. Look not behind.

SOMETHING must be left as a test of the loyalty of the heart—in Paradise, the tree; in Israel, a Canaanite; in us, temptation.

RELIGIOUS joy is a holy, a delicate deposite. It is a pledge of something greater, and must not be thought lightly of; for, let it be withdrawn only for a little, and notwithstanding the experience we may have had of it, we shall find no living creature can restore it unto us, and we can only, with David, cry, "Restore unto me, O Lord, the joy of thy salvation."

A CHRISTIAN should beware of that temptation, Why should I wait for the Lord any longer? He should remember, if it is a time of extremity, that is the very reason why he should wait. If his way is so hedged up that he cannot go forward, he should say, "now is the time for me to stand still, and wait till God opens my way." "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path."

HUMAN nature is always putting forth its fears and unbelief, in anxious questions concerning to-morrow, or some threatening calamity; but Christ says to every Christian, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let

it be afraid: I go to prepare a place for you, and I will protect and guide you throughout the journey thither."

God with us is the traveller's security. Jacob was destitute; he had a long and dreary journey; but God said, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."

God calls not for "thousands of rams," nor "ten thousands of rivers of oil." He calls not his creatures to live in sackcloth and ashes, nor sets them to perform long pilgrimages, nor to inflict pains on their bodies. No! the rigours of superstition are from man. The voice of God is, Be happy here, and for ever! Fly that which will make you miserable everywhere! "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The voice of Christ is, "My Son, give me thy heart;" and to him, who obeys, he will say, Go in peace! go into the grave! go to judgment! go into eternity! go in peace.

A Christian must stand in a posture to receive every message which God shall send. He must be so prepared, as to be like one who is called to set off on a sudden journey, and has nothing to do but to set out at a moment's notice; or like a merchant who has

goods to send abroad, and has them all packed up and in readiness for the first sail.

How many people go out of their sphere under good pretences!

A PERSON who objects to tell a friend of his faults, because he has faults of his own, acts as a surgeon would, who should refuse to dress another person's wound, because he had a dangerous one himself.

WHEN the most insignificant person tells us we are wrong, we ought to listen. Let us believe it possible we may be wrong, when any one supposes we are; and enter into the true littleness which consists in receiving correction like a child.

No man rejects a minister of God who faithfully performs his office, till he has rejected God.

THE plainest declarations of God's favour and the strongest encouragements are generally manifested in the darkest night of trial. Who could be more destitute than Jacob, when he lay down in the desert with a stone for his pillow? See also Acts xxvii. 20–24. 2 Cor. i. 3–5.

"THE pride of Israel testifieth to his face; and they do not return to the Lord their God." This is the worst symptom in a sin-

ner—when he is too proud to go to God. Whatever be our condition, if there is contrition of spirit under it, there is hope of that man. There is no room for despair, to whatever lengths a man may have gone in sin, if he can smite on his breast, and say, "O Lord! though my sins testify against me, yet thou art a God of compassion. Do thou it, for thy name's sake."

A CHRISTIAN should never attempt to try his state while under a temptation. He might as well attempt to examine the face of the moon while she is under an eclipse. But, when he finds corrupt nature setting in with a temptation—and who has not felt this?—let him remember his great Physician. This is the glory of the Son of God, that no case, either of the body or of the soul, was ever found too hard for him! Blessed be God, that we have in him a hiding-place, a covert from the storm, a refuge from all our enemies!

THE great care of the man who is content with the form of godliness without the power, is, that everything should be right without; while the true Christian is most careful that everything should be right within. It would be nothing to him to be applauded by the whole world, if he had not the approbation of God and his own conscience. Real religion is, therefore, a living principle. Any

one may make a show, and be called a Christian, and unite himself to a sect, and be admired; but, for a man to enter into the sanctuary; to hold secret communion with God; to retire into his closet, and transact all his affairs with an unseen Saviour; to walk with God like Enoch, and yet to smite on his breast with the publican, having no confidence in the flesh, and triumphing only in Christ Jesus,—these are the life and acts of a new creature!

O Lord! let me have anything but thy frown, and anything with thy smile!*

Whatever, below God, is the object of our love, will, at some time or other, be the matter of our sorrow.

Take care, Christian! whatever you meet with in your way, that you forget not your Father! When the proud and wealthy rush by in triumph, while you are poor and in sorrow, hear the voice of your Father saying, "My son! had I loved them, I should have corrected *them* too. I give them up to the ways of their own hearts; but to my children, if I give sorrow, it is that I may lead them to a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

* "Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor!
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."
Cowper, Task.—J. P

It is by faith that we contemplate unseen things. To the eye of a clown, a planet appears but a twinkling star; but if he looked through a telescope, and were able to calculate, he would perceive that it was a great world, and would be astonished at its distance and magnitude. While the gay and the busy are moving on their little mole-hills full of anxiety, faith thus reaches beyond the world. It views death as at hand. It looks at heaven, and catches a glimpse of its glory. It looks at hell, and sees the torments of the condemned. It looks at judgment, and realizes that awful day. It looks at eternity, and says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Where there is a real character, a man will not sit down in the Christian conflict, and say, "If I must carry about with me this body of death, I must submit. I must bear these enemies as quietly as I can." No! he will say, as Paul seems to say, "I will be on no terms with sin. I will raise an outcry against the corrupt nature. I will triumph in my Physician. His grace is sufficient for

me; I will wait for a cure, and wait for it in the appointed way. I see light, and hope, and liberty; and I thank God that, if I am a sinner, yet I am a saved sinner!"

"God hath set the day of prosperity and the day of adversity, the one over against the other;" as the clouds are gathered for rain by the shining of the sun; and, if for a moment they are blown aside, we must expect their return. Where, in our sky, should we look for clouds? Where it is brightest; where our expectations are highest. Our sharpest sorrows rise out of our sweetest comforts. Rachel said, "Give me children, or else I die!" and in obtaining what she esteemed her highest comfort—what she would have at any rate—was hidden the cause of her sharpest grief. God gave her children; and, in bearing her second child, "it came to pass, as her soul was departing, (for she died,) that she called his name Ben-oni—the son of my sorrow."

Who is the most miserable man on earth? and whither shall we go to seek him? Not to the tavern, not to the theatre, not even to a brothel, but to the church! That man who has sat Sabbath after Sabbath under the awakening and affecting calls of the gospel, and has hardened his heart against these calls—he is the man whose condition is the most

desperate of all others. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!—and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."

GIVE every kind of knowledge its due attention and respect; but what science is to be compared to the knowledge of Christ crucified? Had a traveller lost his way in some desert, where he had wandered till he was fainting with hunger and thirst, for what would he first ask? for music? paintings? No! he would ask for bread, for water! Anything else offered him would be a mocking of his misery.

WHAT an oppressive burden is taken off a Christian's shoulders, by his privilege of leaving all consequences, while in the path of duty, to God! He has done with—"how shall *I* bear this trouble?" "How shall *I* remove this difficulty?" "How shall *I* get through this deep water?" but leaves himself in the hands of God.

WE may form some idea of the joys of heaven, by the innocent pleasures which God grants on earth. Here is a fine situation, with wonderful prospects—everything to delight the senses; yet all this we find in a world which is under a curse! What then may we not expect in a heavenly world,

where God exercises all his power for our blessedness?

However ill men may treat us, we should never give them a handle to say that we misbehaved ourselves. Were I to meet my most bitter adversary, and know that he was come with the most malicious intentions, I should endeavour to be so on my guard, that he could not lay his finger, with truth, on any part of my conduct.

The motive determines the quality of actions. One man may do a penurious act, because he knows he shall be put to difficulties if he does not; and another may do the same from mere avarice. The king of Edom offered up his son on the wall, and his abominable cruelty excited just indignation; but Abraham, having in intention offered up his son, is held forth to all generations for this act as the father of the faithful.

It is always a sign of poverty of mind, where men are ever aiming to appear great; for they who are really great, never seem to know it.

What the world calls the best company is such as a pious mechanic would not condescend to keep. He would rather say, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

ONE way of reading the Bible with advantage is, to pay it great homage; so that, when we come to any part which we cannot connect with other passages, we must conclude that this arises from our ignorance, but that the seeming contrarieties are in themselves quite reconcilable.

YOUNG Christians on setting out in life, often mistake greatly in not sufficiently attributing events to the immediate providence of God. They are not reluctant, at the end, to acknowledge that their way has been directed; but they do not enough mark it as they go on. There is a habit of saying, "Such a thing may *turn up*," as if it depended on chance; whereas nothing will turn up but what was ordered long before. One cause of this evil is, that the divinity of our day deals too much in common-place. Certain fundamental truths are set forth; and if a man professes these truths, too little account is made of the faith, dependence, and other graces of a Christian. When a man becomes a Christian, he is written upon, as it were, "to be provided for!"—and he ought, therefore, to notice, as he goes on, how Providence does provide for him.

MEN mistake in nothing so much as when they resist their dispensation; for, while God shutteth up a man, there can be no opening.

Resistance does but make the dispensation harder to be borne. Job says, "He teareth himself in his anger; but shall the rock be removed because of thee?" The man is, as it were, in a labyrinth; and the hand which brought him in, must be the hand to conduct him out.

We require the same hand to protect us in apparent safety, as in the most imminent and palpable danger. One of the most wicked men in my neighbourhood was riding near a precipice, and fell over. His horse was killed, but he escaped without injury. Instead of thanking God for his deliverance, he refused to acknowledge the hand of God therein; but attributed his escape to chance. The same man was afterwards riding on a very smooth road. His horse suddenly tripped and fell, and threw his rider over his head, and killed him on the spot, while the horse escaped unhurt.

If a man is dead in sin, our attempting to correct his false notions is like laying a dead man straight, who before was lying crooked. The man is dead, and will remain so; though, before, he was lying crooked, and is now lying straight. It matters little what right notions we may have, while we are dead in sin; for we shall never act up to them, till God awakens our hearts.

To have too much forethought, is the part of a *wretch;* to have too little, is the part of a *fool.*

SELF-WILL is so ardent and active, that it will break a world to pieces, to make a stool to sit on.

WE are too little acquainted with the sacred character of God. "A certain man sold a possession, and brought a certain part of the price." We should have thought this a generous act; but God saw that there wanted a right estimation of his character. Many sins are suffered to pass, to be punished hereafter; but God sometimes breaks out, and strikes an offender dead in vindication of his own glory.

REMEMBER always to mix good sense with good things, or they will become disgusting.

THINGS are not to be done by the effort of the moment, but by the preparation of past moments.

IF there is any person to whom you feel dislike, that is the person of whom you ought never to speak.

IRRITABILITY urges us to take a step as much too soon, as sloth does too late.

WHEN we read the Bible we must always

remember, that like the holy waters seen by Ezekiel, (xlvii.) it is in some places, up to the ankles; in others, up to the knees; in others, up to the loins; and in some a river too deep to be fathomed, and that cannot be passed over. There is light enough to guide the humble and teachable to heaven, and obscurity enough to confound the unbeliever.

TRUE religion as revealed in the Scriptures may be compared to a plum on the tree, covered with its bloom. Men gather the plum, and handle it, and turn and twist it about, till it is deprived of all its native bloom and beauty; the fairest hand would as much rob the plum of its bloom, as any other. Now all that little party-spirit, which so much prevails among men, and which leads them to say, "I am of Paul and I of Apollos," is but handling the plum till it loses its bloom.

THERE are but two classes of the wise—the men who serve God because they have found him; and the men who seek him, because they have found him not. All others may say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

PHILOSOPHY is a proud, sullen detector of the poverty and misery of man. It may turn him from the world with a proud, sturdy contempt; but it cannot come forward, and say,

"Here are rest, grace, peace, strength, consolation!"

We hear much of a *decent* pride, a *becoming* pride, a *noble* pride, a *laudable* pride! Can that be *decent*, of which we ought to be ashamed? Can that be *becoming*, of which God has set forth the deformity? Can that be *noble*, which God resists, and is determined to debase? Can that be *laudable* which God calls abominable?

Many things are spoken of in the Scriptures as good; but there is not one thing emphatically called *good*, which does not relate to Christ or his coming.

Say the strongest things you can, with candour and kindness, to a man's face; and make the best excuse you can for him, with truth and justice, behind his back.

Many people labour to make the narrow way wider. They may dig a path into the broad way; but the way to life must remain a narrow way to the end.

All extremes are error. The reverse of error is not truth, but error. Truth lies between these extremes.

I have no doubt, but that there are persons of every description, under every possible circumstance, in every lawful calling,

among Christians, who will go to heaven; that all the world may see, that neither their circumstances nor calling prevented their being among the number of the blessed.

God has given us four books:—the book of grace; the book of nature; the book of the world; and the book of providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books. It does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them.

Eloquence is vehement simplicity.

God is omniscient as well as omnipotent; and omniscience may see reason to withhold what omnipotence could bestow.

Attend to the presence of God; this will dignify a small congregation, and annihilate a large one.

Having some business to transact with a gentleman in the city, I called one day at his counting house. He begged I would call again, as I had so much more time to spare than he had, who was a man of business. "An hour is nothing to you," said he. "An hour nothing to a clergyman!" said I; "you seem little to understand the nature of our profession. One hour of a clergyman's time rightly employed, sir, is worth more to him than all the gains of your merchandize."

If a man has a quarrelsome temper, let him alone. The world will soon find him employment. He will soon meet with some one stronger than himself, who will repay him better than you can. A man may fight duels all his life, if he is disposed to quarrel.

One day I got off my horse to kill a rat, which I found on the road only half killed. I am shocked at the thoughtless cruelty of many people, yet I did a thing soon after, that has given me considerable uneasiness, and for which I reproach myself bitterly. As I was riding homeward, I saw a wagon standing at a door, with three horses. The two foremost were eating their corn from bags at their noses: but I observed the third had dropped his on the ground, and could not stoop to get any food. However I rode on, in absence, without assisting him. But when I had got nearly home, I remembered what I had observed in my absence of mind, and felt extremely hurt at my neglect; and would have ridden back had I not thought the wagoner might have come out of the house and relieved the horse. A man could not have had a better demand for getting off his horse, than for such an act of humanity. It is by absence of mind that we omit many duties.

A wicked man is a candidate for nothing

but hell! However he may live, if his conscience were awake, he would turn pale at this question: "What shall I do in the end thereof?"

THERE is a great defect in Gray's Elegy. You cannot read it without feeling a melancholy. There is no sunshine, no hope after death. It shows the dark side only of mortality. But a man refined as he was, and speculating on the bankruptcy of human nature, if he brought not evangelical views into the estimate, *could* describe human nature only as hopeless and forlorn; whereas, what *he* felt a subject of melancholy, is with me included in the calculation. I know it *must* be so, and, according to my views, should be disappointed if it were not so. "My kingdom, said our Lord, is not of this world."

REVELATION never staggers me. There may be a *tertium quid*, though we are not yet in possession of it, which would put an end to all our present doubts and questions. I was one day riding with a friend. We were discussing a subject, and I expressed myself surprised that such a measure was not adopted. "If I were to tell you one thing," said he, "it would make all clear." I gave him credit that there did exist something which would entirely dispel my objections. Now if this be the case in many instances, between man

and man, is it an unreasonable conclusion, that all the unaccountable points, which we may observe in the providence and government of God, should be all perfection in the divine mind? Take the growth of a seed. I cannot possibly say what first produces progress of growth in the grain. Take voluntary motion. I cannot possibly say where action begins and thought ends. The proportion between a fly's mind and a man's is no adequate illustration of the state of man with respect to God; because there is some proportion between the minds or faculties of two finite creatures, but there can be none between finite man and the infinite God.

ONE little preacher will endeavour to prove, with a great deal of warmth, the truth of Calvinistic principles; and another little preacher will clearly demonstrate the truth of the Arminian scheme. Good sense will go between them, and say, "There are certain things written on these subjects—'Thus saith the Lord.'" Good sense will hesitate to push what is said to all its apparent conclusions, for—"It is written again." Here ends all dogmatism with a wise man.

A MOUSE that had lived all his life in a chest, says the fable, chanced one day to creep up to the edge, and, peeping out, ex-

claimed with wonder—"I did not think the world was so large."

The first step to knowledge, is to know that we are ignorant. It is a great point to know our place. For want of this, a man in private life, instead of attending to the affairs in his chest, is ever peeping out, and then he becomes a philosopher! He must then know everything, and presumptuously pry into the deep and secret councils of God, not considering that man is finite, and has no faculties to comprehend and judge of the great scheme of things. We can form no other idea of the dispensations of God, nor can have any knowledge of spiritual things, except what God has taught us in his word; and, where he stops, we must stop. He has not told us why he permitted the angels to fall; why he created Adam; why he suffered sin to enter into the world; why Christ came in the latter ages; when he will come to judgment; what will be the doom of the heathen nations; nor why our state throughout eternity was made to depend on such a moment as man's life. All these are secrets of his council. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" God urges it on us again and again, that sin *has* entered; and that we must "flee from the wrath to come." Christ, in the days of his flesh, never gratified curiosity. He answered every inquiry according to the

spirit of the inquirer, not according to the letter of the inquiry. If any man came in humility for instruction, he always instructed; but, when any came to gratify a vain curiosity, he answered, as when one said, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"—"strive to enter in at the strait gate;" or, as when another inquired, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" "What is that to thee? Follow thou me!"

We are too ready to say in trouble, "All these things are against me! but a Christian should say, "This or that may seem against me; but there is mercy for me. There is a Saviour; there is God's word; and there are his ordinances." He should be more careful to enumerate what is *for* him, than what is *against* him. He should look over the list of his spiritual and temporal mercies, as well as that of his sorrows; and remember, that what things are against him are so on account of his sin. Our pilgrimage is but short; let us make use of our helps and means. God has given us a guide, and a support to lean on. When the clouds gather, we have only to look to Jesus. We are not to expect the joys of heaven while on earth. Let us be content that there is a highway for us to walk in, and a leader to conduct us in that way.

It is a Christian's business, as much as

possible, consistently with his duty, to lessen his cares and occupations in the world. It is very common to hear Christians complain what a hinderance business is, while they are, perhaps, at the very time, too anxious to increase it! There is some fallacy, too, in the complaint; for, where there is a principle of grace, it will prevail even in a multitude of engagements. There is much difference between seeking busy situations, and being found in them.

WHAT we call "taking steps in life," are most serious occurrences; especially if there be, in the motive, any mixture of ambition. "Wherefore gaddest thou about to change thy way?"

THE dispensation of grace to some, is little more than a continual combat with corruptions; so that, instead of advancing, a man seems to be but just able to preserve himself from sinking. A boat, with the tide full against it, does well if it can keep from driving back, and must have strong force indeed to get forward. We must estimate grace by the opposition which it meets with.

HOW blessed is the Christian, in the midst of his greatest troubles! It is true we cannot say he is perfect in holiness; that he has never any doubts; that his peace of mind is

never interrupted; that he never mistakes providence. But, after all, his is a blessed condition; for he is supported under his trials, and instructed by the discipline; and, as to his fears, the evil under the apprehension of which he is ready to sink, frequently does not come; or it does not continue; or it is turned into a blessing.

One of the greatest impositions of Satan on the mind, is that of quieting a man in the pursuit or possession of what is lawful. So that if it is not murder, or adultery, or theft, which he is committing, all is well! Because a man's bed is his own, he may idle away in it his inestimable time! Because his business is lawful, a man may intoxicate his mind with the pursuit of it!

The very heart and root of sin is an independent spirit. We erect the idol *self;* and not only wish others to worship, but worship it ourselves.

We must take care when we draw parallel cases, not to take such as are not or cannot be made parallel. For instance; we may ask, before we act, "What would Jesus Christ do in this case? or what would Paul?" but we cannot be guided by this rule in everything, because Christ's mission was peculiar. It was an unparalleled event. It was for

three years only; and like a great fire, he was always burning, always intent on one point. Paul also was in peculiar circumstances; he was sent on an especial errand. In every thing which is in any degree sinful, we should turn to these examples; but, in the conduct peculiar to our station, our application of these examples must be governed by circumstances.

MANY inexperienced Christians are apt to look for wrong kinds of evidences, and so distress themselves about their state. The questions which we should put to ourselves, in seeking the best evidences, are—"Do I hate sin? Is it my grand fear? Is it my grief, that, while I have a good hope of pardon, I yet should make such ill returns? Have I brokenness of spirit? Godliness is analogous to the principle of gravitation, in that it reduces everything to its proper centre.

THE difference between what is called fate, and predestination, is something like that of a house *without* a governor, and a house, *with* a governor. The fatalist says, "everything must, of necessity, be as it is; as a stone *must* fall to the ground, fire *must* ascend, &c. The predestinarian says, that everything is determined by a wise governor, who inspects, orders and superintends the whole machine;

so that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, or a hair of the head perish, without permission.

We are so accustomed to see sin within and without us, that we seldom deeply feel it, or are so shocked at it, as we should be were it less frequent. If an inhabitant of the court were to walk through some of the filthy streets and alleys of the metropolis, how would he be disgusted and terrified! while the poor wretches, who live in them, think nothing of the matter. Thus a clearer view of sin and of the holiness of God, made the prophet cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

It is much easier to settle a point, than to act on it.

I once said to myself, in the foolishness of my heart, "What sort of sermon must that have been which was preached by Peter, when three thousand souls were converted *at once*?" What sort of sermon! such as other sermons. There is nothing to be found in it extraordinary. The effect was not produced by Peter's eloquence; but by the mighty power of God, present with his word. It is

in vain to attend one minister after another, and to hear sermon after sermon, unless we pray that the Holy Spirit accompany his word. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

That humility which courts notice, is not first-rate. It may be sincere, but it is sullied. Do not sound a trumpet, nor say, "Come and see how humble I am!"

We should be careful never to discourage any one who is but searching after God. If a man begins in earnest to feel after him if haply he may find him, let us be aware how we may stop him, by rashly telling him he is not seeking in the right way. This would be like setting fire to the first round of the ladder, by which one was attempting to escape. We must wait for a fit season to communicate light. Had any one told me, when I first began to think religiously, that I was not seeking God in the right way, I might have been discouraged from seeking him at all. I was much indebted to my mother, for her truly wise and judicious conduct toward me, when I first turned from my vanity and sin.

We should always record our thoughts in affliction; set up way-marks; set up our Bethels; erect our Ebenezers; that we may re-

cur to them in health; for then we are in other circumstances, and can never recover our sick-bed views.

A CONTEMPLATIVE life has more the appearance of a life of piety than any other; but it is the divine plan to bring faith into activity and exercise. We choose that sort of walk which we like best. If we love quiet, we are for sedentary piety; but the design of God is to root us out of everything, and bring us into more useful stations.

A WRETCHED prisoner, chained to the floor for a length of time, would deem it a high privilege to be allowed to walk across the room. Another, confined to lie on his back till it had become sore, would think it a great favour if he might be permitted to turn on his side for a few minutes. In a course of habitual pain, I am thankful for five minutes' freedom from suffering. How forgetful have I been of fifty years of tolerable ease! How unmindful are we of what we call common mercies!

IN order to read the Bible with profit, we must begin by denying ourselves every step of the way; for, every step of the way, it will be found to oppose our corrupt nature.

CHRISTIANS resemble travellers in a stage-coach. We are full of our plans and schemes,

but the coach is moving rapidly forward; it passes one mile-stone, and then another; and no regards is paid to the plots and plans of the passengers.

A CHRISTIAN has advanced but a little way in religion when he has overcome the love of the world; for he has still more powerful and importunate enemies—self, evil tempers, pride, undue affections, a stubborn will. It is by the subduing of these adversaries, that we must chiefly judge of our growth in grace.

A FRIEND called on me when I was ill, to settle some business. My head was too much confused by my indisposition to understand fully what he said; but I had such unlimited confidence in him, that I did whatever he bid me, in the fullest assurance that it was right. How simply I can trust in man, and how little in God! How unreasonable is a pure act of faith in one like ourselves, if we cannot repose the same faith in God!

SOME NEGATIVE RULES, GIVEN TO A YOUNG MINISTER GOING INTO A SITUATION OF PECULIAR DIFFICULTY.

As I know you have received much good advice, I would suggest to you a few hints of a negative kind; with a view of admonishing

you to be careful, while you are doing your work, not by any mistakes of your own to hinder your success—

I. By forgetting that your success with others is very much connected with your personal character.

Herod "heard John gladly," and he "did many things;" because he knew the preacher to be a just and holy man. Words uttered from the heart find their way to the heart, by a holy sympathy. Character is power:—

"A good man seen, though silent, counsel gives."

If you would make deep impressions on others, you must use all means to have them first formed on your own mind. Avoid, at the same time, "all appearances of evil," as a covetous or worldly, a vain or assuming, careless or indevout deportment. Never suffer jesting with sacred persons or things. Satan will employ such antidotes as these, to counteract the operation of that which is effective and gracious in a minister's character.

II. By placing your dependence on any means, qualities, or circumstances, however excellent in themselves.

The direct way to render a thing weak is to lean on it as strong. "God is a jealous God; and will utterly abolish idols," as a means of success. He designs to demonstrate that men and creatures are what he makes

them, and that only. This also should be your encouragement; looking, in the diligent and humble use of means, to that spirit of life and power without whose influence all your endeavours will be to no purpose, you have reason to expect help suited and adequate to all your difficulties.

III. By unnecessarily appearing in dangerous or improper situations.

It is one thing to be humble and condescending; it is another to render yourself common, cheap, and contemptible. The men of the world know when a minister is out of his place; when they can oppress him by numbers or circumstances; when they can make him laugh, while his office frowns. Well will it be for him, if he is only rendered absurd in his future public admonitions, by his former compliances; well if, being found like Peter on dangerous ground, he is not seduced, virtually at least, to deny his Master.

IV. By suspicious appearances in his family.

As the head of your household you are responsible for its appearances. Its pride, sloth, and disorder will be yours. You are accountable for your wife's conduct, dress, and manners, as well as those of your children, whose education must be peculiarly exemplary. Your family is to be a picture of

what you wish other families to be; and, without the most determined resolution, in reliance on God, to finish this picture, cost what it will, your recommending family religion to others will but create a smile. Your unfriendly hearers will recollect enough of Scripture to tell you that you ought, like the primitive bishop, to be "one, that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

V. By meddling beyond your sphere in temporals.

Your aim and conversation, like your sacred call, are to be altogether heavenly. As a man of God, you have no concern with politics and parties and schemes of interest, but you are to live above them. There is a sublime spirit in a devoted minister, which, as one says of Christianity itself, pays no more regard to these things, "than to the battles of rooks, the industry of ants, or the policy of bees."

VI. By venturing off general and acknowledged ground in spirituals.

By giving "strong meat" instead of "milk," to those who are yet but "babes;" by "giving heed to fables, which minister questions rather than godly edifying," amusing the mind, but not affecting the heart;

often disturbing and bewildering, seldom convincing; frequently raising a smile, never drawing a tear.

VII. By maintaining acknowledged truth in your own spirit.

Both food and medicines are injurious, if administered scalding hot. The spirit of a teacher often effects more than his matter. Benevolence is a universal language; and it will apologize for a multitude of defects in the man who speaks it; while neither talents nor truth will apologize for pride, illiberality, or bitterness. Avoid, therefore, irritating occasions and persons, particularly disputes and disputants, by which a minister often loses his temper and his character.

VIII. By being too sharp-sighted, too quick-eared, or too ready-tongued.

Some evils are irremediable. They are best neither seen nor heard. By seeing and hearing things which you cannot remove, you will create implacable adversaries; who, being guilty aggressors, never forgive. Avoid speaking meanly or harshly of any one; not only because this is forbidden to Christians, but because it is to declare war as by a thousand heralds.

IX. By the temptations arising from the female sex.

I need not mention what havoc Satan has made in the church, by this means, from the

fall to this day. Your safety, when in danger from this quarter, lies in flight; to parley is to fall. Take the first hint from conscience, or from friends.

In fine, "Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry;" and then, whether those around you acknowledge your real character or not, now, they shall one day "know that there hath been a prophet among them!"

FRAGMENT.

A DYING MINISTER'S FAREWELL.

When a Christian minister feels the springs of life giving way; his faculties decaying; his voice failing; his spirits sinking; though he may not have it in his power to say, as the apostle did to his friends, "I know that ye all, among whom I have preached the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more"—yet he should stand ready to part from his flock, and every sermon should be felt by him as if it were his last.

"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all

the counsel of God." And what have I declared that counsel of God to be? All the curious distinctions of the schools? All the peculiarities insisted on so strongly by different sects? No such thing! I have followed the great apostle in testifying "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

There has been a slander brought against religion, that we are not agreed, as to the truths we set before men. I say, it is false! We *are* agreed. All, who know anything of real religion, are agreed, that the *substance* of the matter is contained in "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

If a man, like the prodigal, feels that he has left his father's house, turned his back on God, and is become a fool and a madman for so doing, and that there is no hope but in his returning again; if such a change of mind is wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, as he wrought in David, when he cried, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin;" if, like Peter, he goes forth weeping bitterly, feeling that he has acted foolishly and wickedly, and that his only hope is in the mercy of God through the Saviour; then the man enters so far into the spirit of religion—"repentance toward God."

But does he rest in this? Nay, he knows

that if he could offer "thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil," he could make no satisfaction for "the sin of his soul." He looks to the atonement! to Him, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Repentance toward God must be accompanied by "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." These men are enabled to say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." I have no refuge but in him, no other hope, no other plea. All my confidence before God is grounded on this, that "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

If a minister testifies these things; if he speaks plainly and simply these grand essential truths of God's word; though he die before another Sabbath return, he may rest in peace, leaving the issue in God's hand.

The ground of a minister's own solid satisfaction cannot be *popularity;* for even to Simon Magus "all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great

power of God!" Neither can he ground his satisfaction on the exercise of strong and enlarged *talents*; for even Balaam was a man of extraordinary endowments. Nor can it be on his *success;* "for many," saith our Lord, "shall say to me, in that day, Have we not done many wonderful works in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you!" As though he had said, "I deny not the works, but ye are evil men."

But a minister's satisfaction must be grounded on the faithful discharge of his office in the delivery of his message. A prince sends a special messenger to his rebellious subjects, with offers of pardon. In examining his conduct, he will not inquire whether they received and approved him or not. The question will be, "Did you deliver my message? did you deliver it as one that believed it yourself? as one in earnest?" If a man should come and tell you, with a cheerful countenance and careless air, that your house was on fire, and that you and your children would be burnt in the flames, if you did not make haste to escape, you would not believe him. You would say, "He does not believe it himself, or he would not be so unfeeling as to speak of it in such a manner."

If a minister delivers his message, then no

scorn, no reproach that may be cast upon him, can take away his rest; he has done his duty. When the king sent out his servants to invite men to his feast, they excused themselves on various pretences; but the servant might say, "No matter! I have declared the message. I may rest in having done my part, though no success seems to attend my pressing invitations."

I would lodge, therefore, my appeal in your consciences. "I take you to record." I appeal to conscience; for there is a conscience in man; and, in serious moments, it will speak out. It wrung from Joseph's brethren that confession, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother!" It forced Balaam himself to cry out, "Let me die the death of the righteous! and let my last end be like his!" It tormented the traitor Judas into that self-accusation, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!"

When a young person has been talked to by his parents; when they have represented to him the misery and ruin of a wicked course, and of bad habits; he might affect to brave it out at the time; but he has gone afterward weeping through the streets, because conscience would speak.

But when the Spirit of God softens a man's heart; when he is made to *feel* what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, then

a faithful minister's appeal to that man is like that of Paul to the Thessalonians, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children,) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, (as it is in truth,) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1 Thess. ii. 10–13.

It is most affecting to see to what miserable shifts men will have recourse, in order to evade the truth.

"It is *irrational*," says one, "to insist so much on certain peculiarities of doctrine!" But whose reason shall be the judge? "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;" but, "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

"It is *unnecessary*," says another. But has God commanded? and do we pronounce his commands unnecessary?

"It is *disreputable*." Did Christ regard

reputation? Nay, "he made himself of no reputation."

"It is a *narrow* way." Ah! there, indeed, you pronounce truly! The way of heaven is a narrow way! But what says the Judge? "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Oh how distressing is it to observe many, to whom we cannot but fear the gospel which they hear preached from Sunday to Sunday, is but the "savour of death!" If God has made a difference in any of us, let us not forget to whom we are indebted.

Brethren! you are my witnesses. I take you to record, that you have had the whole counsel of God declared unto you; that all curious and metaphysical inquiries, all critical and conjectural points, have been carefully avoided for your sake. I have attempted to clear my ministry of all disputable subjects, in order to set before you the plain fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of salvation through him.

But consider! you also must give an account! I must give an account whether I plainly and simply declared the truth, as one who felt its importance, and was in earnest. You must give an account, whether you have

gone away from this place as if you had heard nothing to the purpose, and immediately dissipated your thoughts with some trifling subject, some mere secular concern; or, whether what you heard brought you to your knees before God, beseeching him to seal and impress his truth upon your hearts.

Oh consider the satisfaction you will find, in really embracing "all the counsel of God." Consider how soon the time will come, in which it must be your only satisfaction, that you have embraced it! Let it be your prayer, as you go hence—"O God, give me grace to repent with that repentance which is unto life! Make me serious! Teach me what I must do to be saved! Help me to believe the record which thou hast given of thy Son. Give me faith to receive the atonement; to set to my seal that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ."

Come to your Saviour with humility as a sinner; come with gratitude and love. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words:" when, "so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto mount Sion; and unto

the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See, then, that ye refuse not him that speaketh; but, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Heb. xii. 18–28.

LINES

ON

THE DEATH OF A CHILD AT DAY-BREAK.

BY THE REV. MR. CECIL.

"Let me go, for the day breaketh."—GEN. xxxii. 36.

CEASE here longer to detain me,
Kindest mother, drowned in woe,
Now thy kind caresses pain me;
Morn advances, let me go.

See yon orient streak appearing!
Harbinger of endless day;
Hark! a voice the darkness cheering,
Calls my new-born soul away!

Lately launched a trembling stranger,
On this world's wide boisterous flood,
Pierced with sorrows, tossed with danger,
Gladly I return to God.

Now my cries shall cease to grieve thee,
Now my trembling heart find rest;
Kinder arms than thine receive me,
Softer pillow than thy breast.

Weep not o'er these eyes that languish,
Upward turning toward their home;
Raptured they'll forget all anguish,
While they wait to see thee come.

There, my mother, pleasures centre;
Weeping, parting, care or woe
Ne'er our Father's house shall enter;
Morn advances, let me go.

As through this calm and holy dawning,
Silent glides my parting breath,
To an EVERLASTING MORNING,
Gently close my eyes in death.

Blessings, endless, richest blessings
Pour their streams upon thy heart,
(Though no language yet possessing)
Breathes my spirit ere we part.

Yet to leave thee sorrowing rends me,
Now again His voice I hear;
Rise!—may every grace attend thee,
Rise, and seek to meet me there!

THE END.

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